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ABSTRACT

The first two volumes of the Research in English Acquisition and Development (READ) Institute journal, which cover 1993-1995, contain reports of research and programs in English-as-a-Second-Language instruction, bilingual education, and services to limited-English-proficient individuals. Articles include: "Second Language Teaching: A Theoretical Baseline for Policy Makers" (Robert E. Rossier); "Bilingual Education," adapted from "Reinventing the Schools: A Radical Plan for Boston" (Steven F. Wilson); "A Review of the U.S. GAO Study of Limited-English Students" (Rosalie Pedalino Porter); "A Critique of California's Evaluation of Programs for Students of Limited-English Proficiency" (Robert E. Rossier); Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority Students: Findings from a Naturalistic Study" (Russell Gersten, Thomas Keating, Susan Unok Brengelman); "Findings of the New York City Longitudinal Study: Hard Evidence on Bilingual and ESL Programs" (Barbara Mujica); "The Cost of Bilingual Education in the U.S.: A Review of the ALEC Report" (Marsha Youngblood); and "The Bethlehem, PA, English Acquisition Program: a Blueprint for Change (Judith Simons-Turner, Mark Connelly, Ann Goldberg). (MSE)

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# READ PERSPECTIVES

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**INSIDE:**

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*~ Robert E. Rossier*

**BILINGUAL EDUCATION**
**ADAPTED FROM *REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS: A RADICAL PLAN FOR BOSTON***
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**EDITED BY**
*~ Rosalie Pedalino Porter*

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# READ PERSPECTIVES

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READ is a national research organization which specializes in the support, distribution and promotion of independent research on the acquisition of English-language literacy and on effective schooling for language minority children.

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*Steven F. Wilson's essay "Bilingual Education" is adapted from his book* Reinventing the Schools: A Radical Plan for Boston. *The research and writing of this work were supported by the Pioneer Institute in Boston, a public policy research organization that specializes in the support, distribution and promotion of scholarly research on Massachusetts public policy issues.*

# INTRODUCTION

With this volume, the Institute for Research in English Acquisition and Development (READ) initiates a new series of publications. READ PERSPECTIVES will appear twice yearly, reporting on new research and giving wider distribution to published works focusing on educational opportunities for limited-English students in the United States.

At a Yale Law School Symposium on November 29-30, 1990, six federal judges and six educators joined in a discussion on National Values and Community Values: Equal Educational Opportunity for Limited English Proficient Students. As one of the participants in these deliberations, I found the general conclusions that we arrived at to be particularly appropriate to the diversity of our society. In the context of the Symposium, national values relate to rights that should be enforced uniformly throughout the country, while community values are those which should be left to local discretion. For limited-English students, the fundamental national value articulated by the courts is equal educational opportunity, but the courts have not defined, perhaps wisely, how equal opportunity should be implemented by local school districts (Rebell and Murdaugh, 336-337). Several legal decisions have been handed down in the past twenty-five years of federal and state government activity on behalf of language minority children. The key decision may be in the case of *Castaneda v. Pickard* (Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, 1981), which sets forth a clear set of standards for determining whether a school district is taking the requisite "appropriate action" to overcome language barriers to an equal education. The three-pronged test, which has been adopted by the Office of Civil Rights of the U. S. Department of Education, stated simply, addresses these questions:

- Does the school district embrace a theory recognized by experts as sound?
- Does the school district use a program and resources to implement that theory?
- Does the program actually overcome the linguistic barriers to an equal education? (Rebell and Murdaugh, 364-367)

The two essays chosen for the first volume in the READ PERSPECTIVES series contribute to a heightened understanding of these standards and the complex conditions under which school programs are developed and maintained.

Robert E. Rossier's "Second Language Teaching: A Theoretical Baseline for Policy Makers" provides a detailed review of the most current second language teaching approaches and an analysis of the linguistic theories on which they rest. Rossier focuses most carefully on Stephen Krashen's natural language approach, Jim Cummins' transfer hypothesis, and on the common practice of concurrent translation in bilingual classrooms, pointing out the merits and shortcomings of each. He cites for special mention the interaction theory which appears to hold the most promise for effective second language learning.

Rossier's essay cites the research and opinions of many linguistics experts as well as his own views on the important elements to consider in choosing an appropriate theory on which to base special language programs for limited-English students. It provides educators and policy makers with the necessary information on which to base a decision as to which program will best meet the first *Castaneda* standard: choosing a language teaching theory that has the greatest potential for removing the language barrier to equal educational opportunity.

The companion essay by Steven F. Wilson, Special Assistant to Governor Weld of Massachusetts, is a chapter from Wilson's book, *Reinventing the Schools: A Radical Plan for Boston.* Wilson and his staff collected data, visited schools, and interviewed school personnel in preparing this manuscript which was published in 1992 by the Pioneer Institute in Boston.

There are several reasons why the chapter entitled "Bilingual Education" merits publication and broad national distribution by READ. Massachusetts in 1971 was the first state in the U.S. to pass legislation mandating the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model for the education of all limited-English proficient (LEP) students. Boston, the largest public school district in the state, has the highest number of LEP students and the longest experience with the application of this program model which has been copied across the country.

There is, unfortunately, an almost total lack of research on Massachusetts' bilingual programs. Still, certain valuable lessons are to be learned from the twenty-two years' experience of the Boston Public Schools. Wilson's report reveals an over-enrollment of students in bilingual classrooms, extended stays in bilingual programs (6-8 years instead of the legally mandated 3 year limit), a school district whose students are largely segregated by language and ethnicity, and, in spite of substantially higher spending on LEP students, poor school performance and unacceptably high drop out rates.

Wilson provides a fair description of the application of the second and third *Castaneda* standards, provoking this crucial question: If, after providing the necessary resources (higher spending on LEP pupils, trained and certified teachers, bilingual textbooks, etc.) to implement the chosen theory of TBE, the school district has not demonstrated a measurable improvement in the achievement of LEP students in overcoming the language barrier to an equal education, is it not time to reconsider the theory on which the program is based? Wilson offers several suggestions for alternative schools of choice that could be developed in Boston. This call for options was best expressed in a statement by Charles Glenn, Massachusetts Department of Education official, in 1985: "What may be needed above all is flexibility in developing a strategy to meet the educational needs of linguistic minority students . . . . And we will need the flexibility to be able to discuss what is in the best interest of students . . . without making unqualified support for the present system of bilingual instruction the test of good faith . . . . In the long term bilingual education itself can only benefit from taking its place among the freely chosen educational options in a . . . system which respects diversity." (Wilson, 264)

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# Second Language Teaching: A Theoretical Baseline for Policy Makers

# SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING: A THEORETICAL BASELINE FOR POLICY MAKERS

Robert E. Rossier, Ph.D.

If we carefully read the leading theorists in the field of second language acquisition and review the educational programs that are actually being provided for limited-English students, it is clear that the wisdom of these linguistic experts is largely ignored. Instead of employing the best accepted theories on second language learning, educators are, in many instances, basing programs on a dubious theoretical foundation that, while ideologically and politically correct, is ineffective in achieving the desired outcomes for Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students: the acquisition of a second language (English) for social and academic purposes and the ability to work unassisted in a classroom with English-speaking peers. Removal of the language barrier to an equal education has been the primary objective of all bilingual education law since 1968.

Theory *is* important. The federal courts have ruled that consideration of the soundness of theory is one of the crucial elements in assessing whether a school system is in compliance with the Equal Education Opportunity Act. The three-pronged test to determine whether a school district is taking appropriate action to overcome language barriers was established in the *Castaneda v. Pickard* decision of the Fifth Circuit Court in Texas in 1981. The three conditions are that the school district is:

1. pursuing a program informed by an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts in the field,
2. actually using programs and practices that effectively implement the educational theory adopted by the school, and
3. evaluating such programs after a sufficient length of time to show results indicating that language barriers are actually being overcome. (Rebell & Murdaugh, 365)

If this were simply a question of "competing theories" each of which had merit in its own right, as Judge D. Lowell Jensen put it in the Berkeley, California, case in federal court (*Teresa P. v. Berkeley School District*, 1988) there would be little reason to discuss this topic. Regrettably, there is little substantiation for the theory which is presented in support of official bilingual education in California and sixteen other states. I refer to the theory behind any teaching method or instructional approach which purports to bring about second language learning (English in this case) by means of instruction given in the first language of the student. Considerable evidence will be presented to demonstrate that this position is untenable.

My purpose in writing this paper, therefore, is to demonstrate that many theorists are in close agreement on crucial aspects of second language learning theory, and that this theoretical consensus contradicts the main premises used by bilingual education advocates to gain respectability for bilingual education programs. This divergence between theory and practice is best illustrated in a critique of the Eastman Model, developed and widely used in California, a program that basically ignores second language acquisition principles. The theories and practices reviewed in detail in this paper are translation, transfer, input and interaction.

It is the professional literature—books and refereed journals—that gives us a true idea of what is accepted as valid theory and what is not. I let the references speak for themselves as much as possible, intentionally keeping my commentary to a minimum. While I have included some lengthy direct quotations, the reader will also find a list of additional references that are useful for those who wish to delve more deeply into a particular topic. The reference list is not exhaustive but is carefully selected to represent the best current thinking in second language learning.

## TRANSLATION

Not theory in the true sense of the word, translation as an instructional method has great credibility with the general public as well as with school teachers, administrators and policy makers, as the key to second language learning. The frequently heard call for more and more bilingual teachers to teach the rapidly growing number of limited-English students is based on the belief that a teacher or classroom aide must be fluent in the student's first language. In other words, language learning is seen merely as a process of translation. That this widely held idea runs counter to much that we know about second language learning is not understood by many

Americans because of their limited experience with a second language. Most can only remember the frustration they felt at not being able to communicate adequately in another language and so they project this feeling on to the situation in which language minority students find themselves in American schools.

Whatever the instructional model authorized in a school district, it is common practice for teachers and aides to use translation—sometimes extensively—with their students. Concurrent translation, in which teachers alternate between English and the native language of the students in giving the lesson, is not uncommon. In a collection of scholarly papers published by the California State Department of Education, Legarreta points out that, "Concurrent translation is used in many bilingual programs today" although, she adds, "it is not very effective." Drawing on the work of Wong Fillmore, who has extensively videotaped bilingual classrooms, she explains that, "It was found that students in the classrooms that used concurrent translation tuned in only to the lesson in their first language and ignored it in the language they did not understand" (95).

Direct translation in the LEP classroom is officially frowned upon by the California State Department of Education, but Legarreta tells us that teachers apparently disregard this admonition: "Although the guidelines specify that direct translation is discouraged, in actual bilingual classrooms, this usually is not the case. Much material is presented in direct translation, with mid-sentence switching of languages, or mid-phrase mixing" (94).

There seems to be some agreement among teachers and aides who work with LEP students that if a teacher is able to use translation occasionally to help students to grasp a difficult concept, she should do so. But the teacher should be very disciplined in doing this and, as Krashen and Terrell tell us, should not make translation the centerpiece of the instructional method.

> The first language can be used improperly as well, in a way that discourages comprehensible input. This occurs when *concurrent translation* is used, a technique in which the teacher speaks a little in one language, then translates what was said into the other language. When this happens, students quite naturally listen to the message in their own language and pay no attention to the English input. In concurrent translation, the teacher does not have to try to make the English input comprehensible by using extralinguistic support (realia, gesture) or paraphrase because a translation is available. (Krashen 1985a, 75)

> Before examining these important speech modification techniques, it should be stressed that translation via the native language of the acquirer is not necessary or even desirable, except perhaps in exceptional circumstances. If the instructor has asked a question or given an instruction that has not been understood, it will be necessary to modify speech, repeating the message in several forms until comprehension is achieved. This modification (often simplification) is what ensures that the acquirer will achieve input at the correct (i+1) level. (Author's note: to make clear the notation i+1, it means that input is slightly beyond comprehensibility.) If instructors resort to translation through native speaker teacher's aides, the input has been transmitted via another medium, i.e., the first language.
>
> If opportunities for "comprehensible input" are lost because of frequent translation, acquisition will be severely retarded. (Terrell, 123-124)

As a result of her analysis of bilingual classroom teaching, Wong Fillmore is even more candid in her criticism of translation:

> Language learning occurs when students try to figure out what their teachers and classmates are saying, when teachers through their efforts to communicate with learners provide them with enough extralingual cues to allow them to figure out what is being said, and when the situation is one that allows learners to make astute guesses at the meaning of the language being used in the lesson. Translations appear to short-circuit this process from two directions. When translations are used, teachers tend not to make the kinds of modifications in English that they might otherwise make. Modifications are made, as noted earlier, in an effort to give learners access to the meanings of messages that speakers want to communicate to them. But since access to meaning is provided in translation, speakers do not regard it as necessary to make any modifications in the English they are using as well. If we assume that these modifications enable learners to figure out what is being said, then the English that is being used in this way is not usable to them as input. But aside from the fact that the English which is translated fails as input because it is not properly adjusted, it also fails because the learners tend to ignore it. When learners can count on getting the information that is being communicated to them in language they already know, the do

> not find it necessary to pay attention when the language they do not understand is being used. Observations in classrooms where this method has been used have shown that children tend to tune out when the language they do not know is being spoken. (Wong Fillmore, 35)

Among themselves, bilinguals often refer to their ability to *think* in their second language. They believe that they finally reach a point at which they are able to attend to the content rather than the form of the message that they wish to communicate; in other words, they realize that they no longer have to translate from the first language. To cross over this linguistic frontier should be the goal of all second language learners just as it should be one of the primary objectives of our schools to help all LEP students to achieve this level of linguistic competence.

While almost no research has been done on this phenomenon, there are a few references to it in the literature. Swain lists several reasons for emphasizing output in language learning and among these, she suggests that the use of productive language (output) ". . . may force the learner to move from semantic to syntactic processing" (1985, 249). In less technical language, semantic processing would be translation and syntactic processing would be thinking in the new language. Omaggio explains this concept in simpler language, "Successful students tend to develop the second language into a separate reference system and to think in it rather than to refer constantly back to the native language" (2).

## TRANSFER

If the experts say that bilingual education teachers should not teach bilingually—that is, they should not use concurrent translation as an instructional method or otherwise translate directly from the students' first to their second language—then what type of instructional program should they use to ensure that their students will make satisfactory academic progress and become proficient in English?

The instructional model that has received more attention than any other in recent years is the Eastman Model after the elementary school in Los Angeles where it was originally developed and field tested. It is sometimes called the Language Separation Approach (LSA). This model, a joint project of the California State Department of Education and the Los Angeles Unified School District, has been intensively promoted by Professor Stephen Krashen of the University of Southern California, the National Association for Bilingual Education, and the California Association for Bilingual

Education, among others. The key instructional element of the project is monolingual instruction in each of the two languages (language separation) which is supposed to promote concept development in the primary language and rapid acquisition in the second language (English).

Limited-English students, in their first year in the Eastman program, are given most of their subject matter instruction, including reading, in their first language—that is, monolingual instruction, no mixing of languages. English language instruction is used only for subjects such as art, music, and physical education—subjects which take a small fraction of the school day—and for special English as a Second Language lessons (ESL) in a sheltered (segregated) setting. In each succeeding year, several subjects previously taught in the native language are taught in sheltered English classes and then, the following year, in mainstream classes. By the fourth year, all subjects are taught in English, except for an enrichment program taught in the first or native language (Krashen 1985).

A large percentage of the instruction during the first two years is conducted in the first language of the students. This is done, according to the experts, so that the students will not fall behind in learning subject matter, i.e., math, science, history, and because what they learn in these classes will transfer to English. First language instruction is therefore supposed to benefit second language acquisition because of *transfer of knowledge*. (Author's emphasis.)

Krashen and Biber explain the process in this way: "When students learn subject matter in the primary language, they gain knowledge, knowledge of the world as well as specific subject matter knowledge. This knowledge in turn makes English input more comprehensible, and thus speeds second language acquisition" (21).

Cummins and Swain are more explicit about the role of transfer: "This is an important point; that developing full proficiency in the first language promotes the same in the second language. What it assumes is that there is an underlying proficiency that is common to both languages. Consider, for example, literacy-related skills. The difficult task is learning to read. Once reading, as a skill and as a knowledge source, has been learned, then it is a relatively simple matter to transfer the skill and knowledge to a second language context" (103).

The particular theorists quoted above deride the commonly held assumption that LEP students require *maximum exposure* to English if they are to succeed academically. It is apparent that they do not understand the LEP situation as being one in which the learning of English is of primary importance. Rather, learning subject matter and literacy skills in the native language take precedence. English language learning will be accomplished by means of the brief lessons given in sheltered classes where opportunities for interaction with native speakers of English are very limited.

And of course, according to Cummins and Swain, the magic of transfer will play the major role in the learning of English for these children. Whether this comes about by means of transfer of knowledge, transfer of skills, language transfer, or all three of these is never clearly stated, but transfer is pivotal in their view:

> The issues revolve around two alternative conceptions of bilingual proficiency which can be termed the separate underlying proficiency (SUP) and common underlying proficiency (CUP) models. The argument that if minority children are deficient in English, then they need instruction in English, not in their $L_1$ (first language), implies: (a) that proficiency in $L_1$ is separate from proficiency in English; (b) that there is a direct relationship between exposure to a language (in home or school) and achievement in that language. (Cummins and Swain, 80)

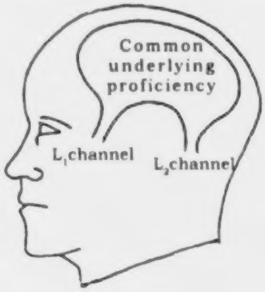

Fig. 1. CUP Model of bilingualism (Cummins and Swain, 83)

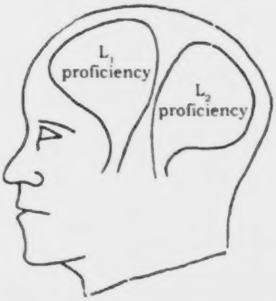

Fig. 2. SUP Model of bilingualism (Cummins and Swain, 81)

> The second implication of the SUP model follows from the first, that if $L_1$ and $L_2$ (second language) proficiency are separate, then content and skills learned through $L_1$ cannot transfer to $L_2$ and vice versa. In terms of the balloon metaphor above, blowing into the $L_1$ balloon will succeed in inflating $L_1$ but not $L_2$. When bilingual education is approached with these 'common-sense' assumptions about bilingual proficiency, it is not at all surprising that it appears illogical to argue that one can better inflate the $L_2$ balloon by blowing into the $L_1$ balloon. (Cummins and Swain, 81)

These statements made by prominent theorists bring several points into question. What do we mean by transfer? Are we talking about transfer of knowledge, language, or skills or all three? And finally, can transfer be called a learning theory and, if so, what part does transfer play in the learning of English as a second language?

In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in transfer in second language learning. Besides numerous individual papers on the subject published in professional journals, there have been several collections of articles that have been issued in book form: *Crosslinguistic Influence in Second Language Acquisition*, Kellerman and Smith, 1986; *Language Transfer in Language Learning*, Gass and Selinker, 1983; and Terence Odlin's *Language Transfer: Crosslinguistic Influences in Language Learning*, 1989, are some of these (see reference list).

There is general agreement that transfer is an important factor in second language learning, that it can be either positive or negative in nature, and that, according to Odlin, "it occurs in all linguistic subsystems: discourse, semantics, syntax, morphology, phonetics, phonology, and writing systems" (152). It has also been suggested that learner strategies are subject to transfer.

> It is generally recognized by both theoreticians and language teachers that when attempting to communicate in a second language, second language learners often 'transfer' elements of their native language (NL) onto the speech patterns of the target (or second) language (TL). In essence, transfer, a traditional term from the psychology of learning, is considered as the imposition of previously learned patterns onto a new learning situation. (Gass, 69-70)

O'Malley and Chamot in their recent work on learning strategies add these concerns: "Another related issue concerns the applicability of language transfer throughout these stages of learning. Faerch and Kasper (1987) define transfer as the process by which $L_2$ learners activate $L_1$ knowledge in developing or using their interlanguage and point out that the process may either support (positive transfer) or detract (negative transfer) from learning" (148).

The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* defines transfer as: "(in learning theory) the carrying over of learned behavior from one situation to another" (1985, 297). Language transfer, it follows, is "the effect of one language on the language of the other," and can be either positive or negative. "Negative transfer, also known as interference, is the use of a native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language. Positive transfer is transfer which makes learning easier, and may occur when both the native language and the target language have the same form" (1985, 160).

Language transfer is a possibility, then, according to this definition, if the form of the words or some other linguistic feature is the same or very similar. If these are words that have the same form and meaning, they are cognates. Knowledge of cognates can be useful in second language learning, but cognates make up only a small part of the lexicon and therefore have limited value. Moreover, there are also false cognates, words that are alike or similar in form but which have different meanings.

The above definition of language transfer can also apply to the transfer of language skills. If skills are very similar, there is possible transfer. Cummins and Swain believe that reading skill and the knowledge gained from this reading readily transfer to the second language. If we are talking about the very important decoding skills in Spanish and English, this does not seem to me to be a valid conclusion.

My experience, both with my own children (English-Spanish bilinguals) and with a large number of my Spanish-speaking ESL students, has taught me that the approach to teaching reading in Spanish and the psychology which undergirds it are very different from the teaching of reading in English. This lack of similarity makes it unlikely that there will be any positive transfer from one language to the other.

Because of the extremely high sound-symbol correspondence in Spanish, children learning to read Spanish are taught to rely on a "one symbol-one sound" approach. This is particularly significant with the Spanish vowels: five symbols, five sounds, and these are constant. In English, however, the phonology is different, the correspondence is much lower, and there are more vowel sounds which vary according to stress patterns. There are other differences, too, which add to the conclusion that there would not be much positive transfer between the two languages in decoding but, instead, considerable negative transfer (interference).

We have relatively little knowledge, other than educated speculation, about the transfer of reading skills because there has been little research done in this area. The studies that have been conducted, though, cast some doubt on the claim that reading skills are easily transferred from one language to another, as is described here by Zutell and Allen.

> Although there is a large and growing number of native Spanish-speaking children in U.S. school systems, there has been little basic research examining how these children learn to read and write in Spanish, the similarities and

> differences in reading and writing in Spanish and English, and the cognitive processes and unique problems of bilingual children as they learn to read and write in both languages. (Zutell and Allen, 333)

> It is reasonable to expect that Hispanic children in bilingual school settings use similar strategies but that they will generate unique patterns of errors based on their own pronunciation of English words and on possible interference from their knowledge of Spanish letter-name-sound relationships. Furthermore, since letter-name-sound correspondences are more consistent in Spanish than in English, bilingual speaking/writing children would seem more likely to use a letter-name strategy longer as they learn to spell in both languages. (Zutell and Allen, 334)

> The results of this study clearly indicate that some Spanish-speaking children's English spellings were influenced by the effect of Spanish phonology on their pronunciation of English words. More successful spellers, regardless of grade level, differentiated between Spanish and English systems, so that their English spelling errors showed little Spanish influence. Poorer spellers, on the other hand, often resorted to letter-name strategies. (Zutell and Allen, 338)

In another study in San Diego, California, of Spanish dominant primary school children enrolled in both English-only and Spanish-only reading classes, it was found that, "The tasks and the interactions in the English-only reading classes apparently did not facilitate the transfer of reading skills acquired in the Spanish reading classes" (Moll and Daiz, 10-11).

Transfer of knowledge is, I believe, a different phenomenon. Certain bilinguals, whose level of expression in both languages is high, understand that what they know in one language can be expressed in the other and vice versa—knowledge is held in common storage, available to expression in either language. Those who have worked as translators or interpreters know this to be true—they are able to change expression in one language to sometimes quite different expression in the other without losing the intended meaning.

But transfer of knowledge is entirely different from language transfer and this is where Cummins and Swain have left their track. What they call common underlying proficiency (CUP) should probably be called CUK with K standing for knowledge. They are mistaken also when they claim that it is not possible for an individual to have separate underlying proficiencies in his two languages because this is precisely the case with accomplished bilinguals—those who use both their languages accurately and extensively. To speak so confidently about knowledge in the first language facilitating comprehensible input in the second when students are given relatively little opportunity to develop the major vehicle for transfer, expressive language, is a non sequitur of the highest order. This easy talk of transfer also overlooks almost completely the effects of negative transfer or interference. The classroom teacher who works daily with LEP students knows that interference—whether phonological, syntactical, or lexical—slows down second language learning.

## INPUT

Young calls input "any stretch of the target language which is available to learners" (122). The *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* provides an equally simple definition: "(in language learning) language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn" (143).

Some authorities make a distinction between input and intake, noting quite correctly that not all input can be assimilated by the learner. Output is the language produced by the learner at any stage of the development of his second language and will be discussed in the section on interaction.

In order for the learner to be able to learn the second language, she must have input from that language. This is an obvious truism and yet there are many who do not seem to understand that squeezing an orange will not produce grape juice nor will listening to French language radio help one to learn Chinese.

Saville-Troike expresses this idea concisely: "Language is learned in the sense that the child cannot acquire it unless he is in an appropriate environment, and in the sense that he will develop whatever specific variety of language (with regard to pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary) is unique to his social environment. . . . He will learn to speak only the language(s) spoken around him, no matter what his linguistic heritage" (14).

As for the quantity of input (time-on-task) desirable for optimum second language learning, it would seem logical to assume that LEP students should receive as much input as possible in the target language. Cummins, Krashen and others dispute this. Rudolph Troike, one-time director of the Center of Applied Linguistics, even advised the U.S. Congress that ". . . the best bilingual program might well be one in which no English at all was used for the first two years" (5).

In a summation of the papers presented at a 1983 conference on language input held at the University of Michigan, Larson-Freeman found a good number of researchers who agreed on the importance of maximum English input. "Researchers in the area of input quantity (Rubin, 1975; Seliger, 1977; Bialystok, 1978; Snow and Hoefnagle-Hohle, 1982; Chesterfield, Barrows-Chesterfield, Hayes-Latimer and Chavez, 1983) have entertained the prospect that learners who have the opportunity to use the TL (target language) the most or to receive the most TL input will be those who exhibit the greatest proficiency. Almost all of these researchers adduced evidence in support of the hypothesis (Snow and Hoefnagle-Hohle being the exceptions) with Seliger perhaps making the most explicit statement about input. He found that 'ESL students who generate significantly more English input both inside and outside the classrooms were more proficient than the so called low input generators'" (435).

Undoubtedly the most influential (and the most controversial) theorist today on the role of input in second language acquisition is Stephen Krashen of the University of Southern California. His "input hypothesis" makes "comprehensible input" the prime requisite in the learner's acquisition of the target language. While Krashen's insistence that input must be comprehensible does not at first glance appear to be a highly provocative idea, there is some confusion about his explanation of the hypothesis. There is disagreement, for example, about whether, in fact, input needs to be completely comprehensible and whether it necessarily has to precede output.

Young cites Gregg as finding that: "Krashen's explanation of the Input Hypothesis is in several points rather vague. It is not clear, for example, what Krashen means by the next stage of development for a learner or i+1 in Krashen's notation, nor how one is to define the present stage of development before exposure to comprehensible input, or i, and concrete examples of i and i+1 are notable by their absence from Krashen's writing" (123).

White believes that incomprehensibility, at least in part, is beneficial to the learner. According to Van Patten, "Rather than reject the input hypothesis, she (White) argues that Krashen is incorrect in insisting that input be comprehensible. For White it is often incomprehensible input that leads learners to make correct hypothesis about $L_2$ structure as they literally struggle to make meaning out of an utterance" (160).

Gathercole presents a case for production preceding comprehension and sums up by saying that, "It is not the case that comprehension always precedes production, nor that all learning is systematic and involves rule-governed behavior, nor that communication is always the primary motivating force behind acquisition" (428).

While input is fundamental to second language acquisition, the learner must go beyond the receptive side of language if she is to ever reach proficiency. Ellis has written: "It has been argued that comprehensible input is not simply the result of the speech adjustments of native speakers but the product of interaction involving both the native speaker and the learner. In this interaction the native speaker makes certain formal and discourse adjustments to ensure understanding, while the learner employs certain communication strategies to overcome problems and maximize existing resources" (82).

## INTERACTION

Krashen has persisted in his assertion that the output side of language does not directly cause language acquisition: "The Input Hypothesis also claims that speaking per se does not cause language acquisition. Rather the ability to speak 'emerges' on its own, as a result of language acquisition, as a result of obtaining comprehensible input." He believes, also, that because children sometimes pass through "a silent period lasting as long as several months before they begin to speak a new language," they should not be asked to use productive language until they are ready to do so (1985a, 9).

But Krashen is definitely in a very small minority when he claims primacy for comprehensible input in second language acquisition. A thorough search of the literature leaves no doubt that there is a substantial consensus among theorists that second language learning must be based on interaction, and interaction, of course, brings output or productive language into play.

This difference in belief between Krashen and most other theorists should be of great significance to educators. Krashen, having bound himself to transfer theory, advocates delayed production of the second language and promotes the use of sheltered content classes which contain only limited English students. The interactionists, instead, believe that these students should be grouped with English speakers from the start so that they will be able to interact with them in the target language.

The following selected citations present the case for output and interaction. Although lengthy in some cases, each writer expresses his or her argument so cogently that the reader will find satisfaction in reading them. It should be understood that these make up only a small portion of what has been written on the subject of interaction. Swain and Lapkin state:

> Krashen has argued that what is essential for language acquisition is comprehensible input. Swain has argued that

> what is also needed is a demand for "comprehensible output." By comprehensible output, it is meant that the learner is pushed toward the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed but that is conveyed accurately, coherently, and appropriately . . . . Our claim, then, is that producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to convey his or her intended meaning successfully. (Swain and Lapkin, 156-157)

Wilga Rivers clearly describes the nature of language learners as productive human beings:

> At present we are being told that all that is needed for developing communicative ability in the oral or graphic mode is that students should receive much comprehensible input, without attempts at production for some time, and the rest will follow—structures will appear in an innate natural order and production (ability to express one's own ideas) will develop spontaneously in its own time. This viewpoint warrants careful examination. (Rivers, 1)
>
> Children and students are not machines to be manipulated in order to find the most efficient way of producing what we may want them to produce. They are interactive human beings. Students, we now know, achieve facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages—messages that contain interest to speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both—that is, through interaction. (Rivers, 2)
>
> Krashen and Terrell maintain that with plenty of comprehensible input the ability to speak (or write) fluently in a second language will come on its own with time. That just one way of using language (namely comprehension) should in some incidental and effortless way lead to a mastery of another (that is, production), which involves quite different processes and requires control of distinctively different aspects of language, seems difficult to support, especially when we observe the effort small children have to devote long after they have attained a high level of comprehension. That this is what takes place in second language learning has yet to be demonstrated. The various experiments with methods that concentrate on comprehension (of aural and written materials) to the exclusion of production until a later stage have failed to show that speech of any complexity does

> emerge effortlessly as promised. Most reports of experiments in this area are found, on examination, to end with the hope that this will be so. (Rivers, 4)
>
> In listening, the syntax may be beyond previous experience, but this does not faze us because we infer meaning or, if necessary, ask for clarification. In speaking, we are in control and with practice in the right strategies we can make a little go a long way. But we must possess that little. Developing language control has never been easy and effortless. Even after years, it is not so in our first language. (Rivers, 5)
>
> These many considerations point to an interactive approach as the most appropriate pedagogical way of developing usable language control—an approach in which comprehension and production retrieve their rightful relationship as an interactive duo in communicative exchanges. We must provide as many opportunities as possible for meaningful interaction as language is being learned and used. Not only will teachers interact with students, but students with fellow students and with the community of speakers of the language (either by going out into the community or by bringing the community into the classroom, actually or vicariously. (Rivers, 6)

Wong Fillmore, who has conducted probably the most thorough ethnographic study of bilingual classroom interaction to date, emphasizes the importance of contact between LEP students and native speakers of English:

> Contrary to the usual assumption that children learn language mainly from peers outside the classroom and not from teachers, it appears that for many limited-English students, the only place in which they come into regular contact with English speakers is at school. Thus, language learning, if it is going to take place at all, is going to have to happen at school. The classroom can be an ideal place to learn English if it allows learners to be in close and continuing contact with teachers and classmates who speak the target language well enough to help in its learning. This of course, depends on the actual availability of classmates who speak English and on their willingness to interact with learners in ways that will help them learn the target language. (Wong Fillmore, 19) . . . we know from studies of both first and second language acquisition that learners need more than mere exposure to the language to be learned. Language learn-

> ing is possible when learners are in frequent enough contact with speakers of the language to develop sets of shared experience and meanings which help them to communicate despite the lack of common language. When speakers interact with learners on a continuing basis, and they have reason to communicate with them, they will find ways of conveying information to them. (Wong Fillmore, 33)

Interaction can take place not only by means of oral communication, but also through reading and writing in the target language. One promising new development in the education of limited-English is called content-based instruction. Chamot and Stewner-Manzanares describe this: "In the content-based approaches, the focus is on the subject matter to be learned and language development is almost incidental to the acquisition of the concepts . . . Experimental evidence for the effectiveness of content approaches comes from immersion studies both in Canada and the United States, and also from experimental studies in which LEP children in a special math and science program increased their English language proficiency as they acquired math and science concepts" (17).

This approach contrasts sharply with the commonly used audio-lingual method which, through oral drills and written exercises, emphasizes the structural aspects of the language to be learned. Snow, Met, and Genesee point out the essential difference in the two approaches: "For young children, cognitive development and language development go hand in hand; language is a tool through which the child comes to understand the world. In first language acquisition, these processes are paired naturally. For children who are $L_2$ learners, however, traditional methods for teaching second/foreign language often dissociate language learning from cognitive or academic development. In contrast, an integrated approach brings these domains together in instruction" (201-2).

The integration of language and content teaching can have both motivational and cognitive value: "Content provides a primary motivational incentive for language learning insofar as it is interesting and of some value to the learner and therefore worth learning. Language then will be learned because it provides access to content and language learning may even become incidental to learning about content . . . Content also provides a cognitive basis for language learning in that it provides real meaning that is an inherent feature of naturalistic language learning. Meaning provides conceptual or cognitive hangers on which language functions and structures can be hung" (Snow, Met and Genesee, 202).

Much of the work that has been done on content-based instruction stems from the Canadian immersion programs in which this instruction usually takes place in sheltered settings. Krashen has written about sheltering and is a strong advocate of this type of instruction for second language learners.

The advantage of teaching content in sheltered English classes is obvious. Limited-English students are grouped together in classes without native English speakers so that the teacher will be able to adapt the presentation of the content to the needs of these students. In doing so, however, the value of the student language interaction in the classroom is lost. But content-based instruction can be carried out in an integrated setting in which limited-English students can interact linguistically with English speaking classmates. Rivers has spoken for this type of instruction in passages which appear earlier in this section.

Milk also advocates the merging of content teaching with a "learner-centered organization of the classroom, whereby instruction is accomplished in large measure through student-student interaction." This interaction, as much as possible, would involve fluent English speakers and limited-English students. He lists two elements as being "critical for conceptualizing an integrative language development approach in bilingual education: (1) the integration of second language development into regular content area instruction and (2) the creation of classroom conditions which will enable pupils to receive the kind of input in the second language that will stimulate acquisition" (662-3). The input created by the classroom conditions referred to by Milk comes, of course, from the presence of native English speakers working with limited-English students in the classroom.

How is content taught in English to students who still have not mastered the language? Wong Filmore describes successful content teaching practice:

> There was, in the lessons we observed in these classes, an emphasis on communicating directly in English as much as what was to be learned by the students as possible. By making careful modifications in the content itself, by adjusting the language used in many ways that have been described as characteristic of the language used with language learners, by carefully tailoring the language used according to feedback provided by the learners themselves as to whether or not they comprehend what is being said, the teachers in the successful classes made it possible for students to get something out of each lesson, even at the earli-

> est stages of language learning. A point to be made here is that in the lessons we observed, the language being used was in the service of communicating subject matter to the students. It was, therefore, quite different from the language that gets used in, say, typical ESL lessons where the language is used strictly for practice. (37)

## AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOR

Although language learning is a highly individual process, relatively little attention has been paid to the role that psychological variables play in second language acquisition. One of the most important of these variables—avoidance behavior—is seldom explicitly mentioned in the literature although certain examples of its effects are occasionally reported without being identified as avoidance.

Legarreta, for example, tells of Wong Fillmore's research in videotaping Spanish and Chinese bilingual classrooms. In a classroom in which concurrent translation was used, she states that Wong Fillmore and associates noticed that Spanish-speaking students tuned out the English portion of their bilingual lesson: ". . . the students apparently learn to ignore the language they do not understand" (95). This is a very clear case of avoidance behavior—something that Legarreta and Wong Fillmore apparently failed to realize—and is very common in language learning, both with receptive and productive language.

In psychology, avoidance and approach behaviors are seen as opposite ends of a single scale (Coleman, 1969). Avoidance is defined as: "Ambient behavior, or withdrawal, liable to increase distance between the subject and a goal (a physical object, a social partner or a situation). . . . Avoidance can be a learned reaction to specific situations. . . . It is displayed in the motor phenomena of flight (escape) and defense, but it is also interpreted as an inner ego-protective process (Freud), as an inner process for removal of possibly threatening cognitive patterns (Lazarus), of specially tabooed words, etc. (perceptual defense, subliminal perception), and for protection against painful and persistent stimulation (J.M. Sokolov). Avoidance in thinking and perception is usually known as defense or defensive behavior" (Eysenck, Arnold, and Meili, 110).

Foss and Reitzal view what is called communicative anxiety and then by extension, foreign language anxiety, as causing avoidance behavior: "Communication anxiety is the abnormally high and debilitating level of fear associated with real or anticipated communication with one or more persons. . . . Foreign language anxiety seems to share certain characteristics with communication anxiety, for example, high feelings of self-consciousness, fear of making mistakes, and a desire to be perfect when speaking. . . . . Furthermore, foreign language anxiety entails a risk to self beyond that experienced by a native speaker because the speaker knows that he or she cannot present the self fully in the new language" (438).

Foss and Reitzal refer to a relational competence model of Spitzberg and Cupach which includes five fundamental components or processes, one of which is *motivation*: "Motivation is the foundation of the model, since it means the difference between communicating and not communicating. By motivation, Spitzberg and Cupach mean the affective approach or avoidance response to a particular communication situation. Obviously, if a person avoids a particular situation, the opportunity to communicate simply is not available. Some second language learners may choose not to communicate in a situation because they judge their capabilities in the new language to be so poor that not communicating is perceived as more rewarding than doing so. . . . Avoidance at the motivational level reinforces the perception of incompetence because the individual never puts himself or herself in a position to increase skill levels and to be evaluated positively by others" (442).

The tendency to avoid anxiety-filled situations, then, is normal in language classrooms, but it is even more so in bilingual classrooms in which learners come to understand that they do not have to cope with the difficulties of the new language. If the lesson is given bilingually, they avoid listening to it in English because they know that they will receive it in their first language either orally or in written form. If they do not want to use speech in the new language to ask questions or respond to the teacher, they ask or respond in their first language because they know that the bilingual teacher understands it. Eventually this type of behavior becomes habitual and learners make little progress toward proficiency in the new language.

## CONCLUSION

The case made for the predominant model of bilingual instruction—that exemplified by the Eastman Curriculum Design project in Los Angeles—is built on some rather tenuous assumptions. In the students' first several years in these bilingual programs, a high percentage of class time is devoted to subject matter and reading instruction in their primary language and, for the most part, their English language development is deferred to a later time. Moreover, during this early period in the time that is allotted to English language instruction, major attention is placed on receptive language with language production being delayed until a future time when the students are supposedly ready for it.

The theoretical justification given for the delay of the English language development of limited-English students is that what knowledge these students gain from primary language instruction will transfer to English, if and when their English language proficiency reaches a certain threshold level and this, in turn, will somehow facilitate overall English language learning.

If the literature on transfer tells us anything, it is that no one is yet certain about when and how transfer works. We know that there is positive transfer, but it is also clearly established that there is negative transfer and that this alone, or in conjunction with other processes, can inhibit learning.

Another inhibiting factor in language learning is avoidance behavior. If learners have little opportunity to be in situations which require production in a new language, avoidance of situations or of certain structural aspects of the language will be a likely result.

Beyond this, there is no mention in the literature of transfer of knowledge and language transfer being synonymous. And yet, Cummins, Krashen and others confidently proclaim this to be the case.

Knowledge and vocabulary gained in native language instruction classes will certainly benefit language minority students, and it will transfer to English eventually but, unless it is cognate, it will not enhance the development of English because language is more than just certain lexical items, i.e., grammar, syntax, morphology, phonology, etc.

How is a second language learned? We know that the learner must have input from the target language; this seems to be so obvious that we scarcely need mention it. It seems logical, also, that this input should be comprehensible although there is some disagreement here—even Krashen has added a one to his input (i+1) to signify that input does not have to be completely comprehensible.

Is input enough? According to many of our authorities, output (production) is also needed from the very beginning so that the learner can "negotiate" meaning. Without using this productive side of language, the learner will never reach the point at which he automatizes (learns to think in) the structural aspects of his new language so that he can concentrate on the content of his communications.

Production, then, leads to interaction, and it is only when the student is in an interactional environment that he will make real progress in the development of his English and in subject matter classes taught in English. Content-based instruction also permits the learner to benefit from this interaction while at the same time making satisfactory academic progress.

It is my hope that this discussion of the clear differences between interactional approaches to English language teaching and the native language intensive bilingual approach will be sufficiently provocative to cause the reader to further explore this subject. As the number of immigrant students in our public schools continues to grow at a more rapid pace than the other segments of the school population, the need to understand the complexity of the second language learning process is urgent. This understanding is crucial to the development of effective teaching programs for limited-English students. There should be no doubt that the future success or failure of these students will affect the country at large. Educational policy, therefore, must be based on our understanding of how the schools can best help these young people to become fluent in English and thus open for themselves the door to educational, social and economic opportunity that will ultimately benefit us all.

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# BILINGUAL EDUCATION

## ADAPTED FROM *REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS: A RADICAL PLAN FOR BOSTON*

# BILINGUAL EDUCATION

### ADAPTED FROM *REINVENTING THE SCHOOLS: A RADICAL PLAN FOR BOSTON*

Steven F. Wilson

In 1967, U.S. Senator Ralph Yarborough introduced legislation to provide federal funds for bilingual education programs. But as to the programs' design and purpose, the legislation was vague—perhaps intentionally so. Even Yarborough admitted, "Every time people ask me, What does bilingual education mean? I reply that it means different things to different people."[1] Is bilingual education intended to help children with limited English proficiency (LEP) master the English language? Or is its purpose to preserve the native language and culture? A quarter of a century later, these questions remain unanswered.

Despite this confusion of purpose, Massachusetts did not hesitate to adopt its own bilingual education law, Chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws, mandating transitional bilingual education (TBE), an instructional model of questionable efficacy and considerable cost. In Boston today, 16.6 percent of all students, and 40.5 percent of all Hispanic students, are in bilingual programs.[2] Their education costs far more than that of regular education students. Critics charge that many LEP students remain in the program well beyond its intended three-year course and receive inadequate instruction in English. Deprived of the English-language skills they need to perform at grade level in the regular classroom, these students are often referred to special education. Many drop out, lacking the skills they need to get good jobs or go to college.

Many bilingual educators never wanted TBE to be "transitional" in the first place. LEP students, they argue, should be educated in both English and their native language throughout their schooling. Critics of bilingual education claim that intensive English as a Second Language (ESL pull-out) programs result in far superior development of English skills. Other educators claim the best results obtain from "structured immersion" programs, in which children are taught in English at a level appropriate to their comprehension. Still other educators call for two-way bilingual programs, in which English-speaking students master the language of their classmates. Which programs are the most effective for which ends? Can one program meet the needs of all children? Would choice satisfy all parents and defuse the political tensions that haunt bilingual education?

## TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The nation's schools have historically treated linguistic minorities shamefully. Many children with limited English proficiency were labeled as mentally retarded, punished for using their own language, or simply left to sink or swim in the alien classroom of their English-proficient peers. This ignominious history fired today's emotional debate over bilingual education. Policymakers came to believe, as bilingual education researchers Christine Rossell and J. Michael Ross put it, "that any policy which ignores the mother tongue in favor of English is racist, and any policy which maintains the mother tongue, however inadequately, is equitable."[3]

Educators now recognize that LEP students need special help. While several different instructional approaches have evolved, TBE is by far the most common in the United States. LEP students are supposed to remain in TBE for three years, and then make the transition into the regular classroom. Each class is composed of students of one native language; the teacher initially instructs the students in all subject matter in the native tongue, and provides English lessons. As the students' proficiency increases, the teacher uses more and more English until the students are prepared to join their regular education peers.

TBE's instructional design relies on three cognitive theories: First, learning to read in the native language improves students' ability to learn to read English. Second, unless instruction in mathematics and other subjects continues in the native language while students learn English, they will fall behind in these subjects. Third, classes conducted in the native language provide an environment supportive of learning, increasing parental involvement and enhancing student achievement.

Proponents of bilingual education obtained a governmental mandate through Congress (in the Bilingual Education Act of 1968) and the courts. In the pivotal 1974 Supreme Court decision *Lau v. Nichols,* Chinese plaintiffs from California successfully argued that their special needs were not met by programs in the schools. The plaintiffs invoked the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII, which states that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participating in or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program receiving federal assistance."[4] The Court held that any school district receiving federal assistance must overcome the English language deficiencies of its LEP students: "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful discussion."[5]

But the justices left it to local officials to determine how to meet this requirement: "No specific remedy is urged. . . . Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instructions to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others."[6] Yet in 1975, the Office for Civil Rights issued the *Lau remedies,* recommendations that set forth in every detail how districts should design and administer programs for LEP students. To determine the pupil's primary language, school administrators were instructed not to gauge the student's proficiency in English, but to find out which language was used at home, which language he had first learned, and which he used the most frequently. A student fluent in English might therefore still be eligible for services.[7] The federal government insisted that TBE was the optimal approach for providing equal opportunity to linguistic minorities. No scientific evidence was presented to back this claim, yet federal aid was made contingent on following the guidelines and most school districts fell in line.[8]

Excessive interference by the judiciary and federal and state government limitations on the autonomy of local school districts have detracted from the education of LEP children and stifled the development of promising pedagogical alternatives. Indeed, the *Lau* remedies have sometimes been taken to absurd extremes. Since Cape Verdean has no written form, rigorous adherence to the TBE model justified the federal government in creating one. Students could then progress from the spoken language, to reading the synthetic Cape Verdean, to reading Portuguese, and finally to learning English.[9] Similarly, the Office for Civil Rights ordered a district in Alaska to develop a written Eskimo language to support TBE.[10]

Massachusetts was the first state to enact legislation requiring transitional bilingual education in any district with 20 or more LEP children who speak the same language. Chapter 71A does not require more than three years of TBE instruction, and parents can opt out of the program, though this requires an active step on their part. The law allows school committees to sustain the program beyond three years, however, and many advocates say children are mainstreamed too soon.[11]

## EFFECTIVENESS OF TBE

Ever since *Lau*, the effectiveness of transitional bilingual education has been questioned. The debate has been long on passion but short on clarity. Studies on TBE have focused on two measures of academic success: English and math skills. Most rigorous scientific studies show TBE to be no more effective than simply placing LEP students in regular classrooms.[12] Some advocates, however, have urged that the program's measure of success be broadened. Data that gauge the "social pathology which accompanies injustice"—including employment figures after graduation, drug addiction and alcoholism levels, suicide rates, and prevalence of psychiatric disorders—would all be assessed in evaluating the program's value.[13] The goals of bilingual education may indeed reach beyond English and math proficiency. Yet these are the skills that are the most vital to students' futures. As Rossell and Ross have argued, it is on these skills that tests will be given throughout their schooling, and on the basis of which key decisions affecting their further education and livelihood will be made.[14]

The research on bilingual education has a poor reputation among both advocates and critics. The primary methodological problem is the absence of a control group. A properly designed study would compare the "treatment" group of students administered the bilingual program with a "control" group of students in a submersion program (i.e., in a regular classroom). Many studies erroneously claim a program is effective if its students show any gain in skills. But if the gains made by students in the treatment group are *less* than those of the control group, then the child would have progressed more without the intervention and the program has in fact had an adverse effect on the child's education. Rosalie Porter, author of *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education*, points out that many studies lack comparison groups or fail to pretest students to determine initial levels of aptitude.[15]

Even bilingual advocates concede that there is little scientific evidence of TBE's superiority. One well-known bilingual advocate, Kenji Hakuta, concludes,

> Studies of the effectiveness of bilingual education in improving either English or math scores have not been overwhelmingly in favor of bilingual education. To be sure, there are programs that have been highly effective, but not very many.[16]

Rossell and Ross have done the most comprehensive review to date of the many existing studies on TBE.[17] Their search of the past two decades' literature identified 35 studies that were methodologically rigorous. For a study to qualify, they insisted that there be both treatment and control groups, and if students were not assigned randomly to these groups, that pre-treatment differences between students be controlled for statistically. Of the 35 studies, 29 percent found TBE to be superior to submersion, 21 percent found TBE to be inferior, and 50 percent found it to be no different than submersion. Only 7 percent of the studies found TBE to be superior at teaching math, 27 percent found it inferior, and 67 percent found it to be no different. In other words, 71 percent of the studies found TBE no better or worse at teaching English, and 94 percent found it no better or worse at teaching math than doing nothing.[18]

Rossell and Ross conclude that the studies find no support for two of the three key theoretical premises of TBE. First, there is no empirical evidence that learning to read in the native tongue facilitates reading in English. If it did, English achievement under TBE would be consistently superior to submersion. Second, there is no evidence that learning math and other subjects in their native language keeps language minority children from falling behind in these subjects. If it did, the math achievement of students in TBE would also be consistently superior to submersion.[19]

In fact, common sense suggests that the best predictor of achievement in the second language is the amount of time studying it. As Rossell and Ross also note, this supposition is borne out in nearly every analysis. The "time on task" principle was perhaps most exhaustively explored in the Canadian structured immersion experiments. Canadian researchers compiled the results of hundreds of experiments in which students received different amounts of second language instruction, from less than an hour a day to the full school day. Achievement in the second language varied commensurately.[20] Some critics have argued that these tests were conducted with middle-class children and the findings, therefore, are not applicable to the American immigrant population. But experiments with working-class children replicated the findings and only underscored the time on task principle.[21]

If time on task best predicts student outcomes, would not TBE always produce inferior results? Rossell and Ross note that many studies found TBE to be the same or better than submersion. They conjecture, first, that the psychological benefits of TBE over submersion—the use of native-language instructors and the welcoming environment—may cause students to come to school more often. The TBE student may spend more time in school, yet receive less English instruction when there, than his counterpart who is alienated in the regular classroom. Second, instruction in the best TBE classrooms may more nearly resemble that of structured immersion programs, in which most instruction is in English. Rossell and Ross conclude that the most promising approach may be structured immersion with bilingual teachers of the same ethnic group as the students. Then, both the psychological and cognitive needs of LEP children would be satisfied.[22]

One of the largest studies of bilingual education is the American Institutes for Research (AIR) report of 1977, a national survey of 38 Title VII Spanish/English bilingual programs involving some 8,900 students. AIR compared academic outcomes of students in transitional bilingual education with those of students in submersion programs, including some with ESL pull-out classes. AIR found TBE to be inferior to submersion for learning English (worse than "doing nothing") and no different for learning math.[23]

TBE advocates like Jim Cummins, a Canadian linguist, have argued that the study failed to distinguish between effective and ineffective bilingual programs, and that weaknesses in many TBE implementations—including a lack of bilingual teachers, poor curricula, and lack of support from the district—obscured the strengths of high-quality programs. Furthermore, some non–Title VII treatments had bilingual teachers. Since treatments were defined on the basis of funding, not instructional content, Cummins and others contend that no inferences can be drawn from the study.[24] It is true that the report does not tell us anything about what the results of TBE would be if it were ideally implemented. But as a test of the programs actually in use, the results stand.

Cummins' criticism is especially ironic in light of how some bilingual education researchers would characterize the best-case instruction. William Tickunoff's study of successful bilingual instruction identified three key attributes: 1) 80 percent of classroom time is allocated to academic learning, 2) teachers use the native language only when needed to clarify instruction, and 3) non-language subjects are taught in English. These, of course, are the characteristics of structured immersion, not of TBE.[25]

The Ramirez Report is the most ambitious study to date comparing instructional programs for LEP children. This two-volume, 1,000-page work was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education at a cost of $4.5 million. Titled the *Longitudinal Study of Structured Immersion Strategy, Early-Exit and Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education Programs for Language-Minority Children*, it examined nine programs involving 2,000 Spanish-speaking students over a four-year period. The study concluded that "it appears that [academic skills in] those sites that provided their students with the most primary [native] language instruction consistently grew faster" and that students "who were provided with a substantial and consistent primary language development program, learned mathematics, English language, and English reading skills as fast or faster than the normal population."[26]

But Christine Rossell has identified several fundamental methodological flaws that call the study's findings into question.[27] One of her main critiques is that the study design and subsequent data analysis are based on nominal program types—early-exit TBE, late-exit TBE, and structured immersion—rather than on what actually occurred in the classroom. The researchers categorized each classroom as one of these three types, and gathered extensive pre- and post-treatment data on all participating students. The problem, the report's authors concede, is that there is as much variation *within* the actual classroom practice of each program type as there is *between* nominal program types. In fact, the researchers gathered and reported extensive data on observed classroom practices—most significantly, the amount and type of English used—but failed to incorporate these telling data in their analysis. For instance, in both the early- and late-exit TBE programs, a significant proportion of teachers did not speak Spanish, making the programs much more like immersion. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the early exit programs and one-third of the late-exit programs provided first graders with reading instruction in English, yet TBE requires that reading be taught first in the native language, and in English only in the second grade or later.[28] This finding, too, suggests that many programs labeled TBE were in fact closer to structured immersion.

Students in all programs were close to the national norm in English by the end of first grade. Rossell speculates that these students, after spending all of their early childhood in the United States, might have been highly proficient in English when entering kindergarten. Rossell provides additional persuasive evidence that many of the children in the programs already knew English.[29] Not only were the scores close to the national norm after kindergarten, but the *change* in scores over time was very small. Scores of a truly LEP child would begin well below the norm and rise rapidly with treatment. Only children who are *already* nearly proficient in the language would be expected to show such small gains from one year to the next.

The study strongly suggests that not only are many students unnecessarily enrolled in bilingual programs (at considerable expense), but that children stay in the programs longer than necessary and much longer than the model anticipates. As Rossell notes, while 72 percent of the students in the early-exit TBE programs had been reclassified as English proficient, only 17 percent had been mainstreamed into regular education. Only 26 percent of structured immersion students had been mainstreamed after three years.[30]

The study also found that bilingual educators frequently ignore the wishes of parents: Forty-one percent of parents whose children were in early-exit TBE programs wished their child to be taught only in English. Clearly, these children belonged in structured immersion.[31]

Finally, the advantages of structured immersion programs are understated by the analysis because more than two-thirds of students in these programs were classified as learning disabled, in contrast to 43 percent of early-exit and 17 percent of late-exit students.[32]

Rossell finds no support in the study for the theory that instruction in the native language facilitates learning English, but finds no support for the time on task principle either. The second theory of bilingual education, that native language instruction allows students to learn math and other subjects more rapidly, is also not supported. The amount of time in the classroom devoted to repetition, discussion, and drill varied little across the three program types. As Rossell writes, "The ability to use the student's native tongue does not cause the teachers to provide more complex instruction as measured in this study. Nor does it keep the students more engaged."[33]

Rossell proposes that Ramirez's raw data be reanalyzed as a function of instructional time in English, rather than of nominal program types. The data presented in the Ramirez study suggest that structured immersion programs result in the highest academic achievement, and early-exit TBE programs in the lowest achievement.[34] Late-exit programs with the most Spanish resulted in achievement levels between those of the other two instruction types. Rossell, however, cautions that none of these findings can be relied on given the problems with the report.

In sum, the research on bilingual education raises troubling questions about the effectiveness of the governmentally mandated design. Would other instructional designs prove significantly more effective at equipping Boston's language minority children with the basic academic skills to succeed in school and in the job market? The school day is finite. Should parents of LEP students be able to choose how much their children's education emphasizes native language skills, the child's native culture, and mastery of English?

## ALTERNATIVES TO TBE

While Massachusetts state law mandates transitional bilingual education, elsewhere other instructional designs for LEP children have shown promising results. The Fairfax County, Virginia, school district, one of the country's 10 largest, has since 1975 provided ESL programs for thousands of LEP students. Even though the students enrolled in the program are not taught in their native language, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights decided after a five-year investigation to give official approval to the program. After leaving the program, most students perform at or above grade level. In a 1988 analysis, 80 percent of students were determined to be proficient in English within two years of joining the program.[35] Critics of the Fairfax plan have claimed that its students are drawn from upper-middle-class families and discounted the program's results. Yet, today, approximately 40 percent of Fairfax's LEP students are poor enough to be eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches.[36]

The Berkeley, California, school district was one of the first in the country to provide extra help to language minority children. Today, the district offers both bilingual and ESL pull-out programs to students in kindergarten through grade 6. The Spanish bilingual program provides instruction in Spanish with increasing English through sixth grade; two middle schools provide sheltered (simplified English) subject matter classes. Most bilingual students remain in the program for seven years. The ESL program offers intensive pull-out classes and tutoring, but students spend approximately 88 percent of their time in the regular classroom. In the 1989 case *Teresa P. v. Berkeley Unified School District*, a group of Hispanic parents sued the district, alleging that the school district had an inferior, and thus unconstitutional LEP program; not all of the teachers in its language program held specialized ESL or bilingual credentials and, they argued, the district employed an insufficient number of native-tongue teachers and tutors. The plaintiffs also alleged "the failure to provide students' instruction in academic subjects in the students' primary language sufficient to sustain academic achievement."[37] However, extensive evidence failed to substantiate the plaintiffs' claims that the district needed to provide more primary-language instruction to assure the rights of the district's LEP children.

Rossell has compared standardized tests administered to Berkeley students in the spring of 1987 with the previous year's results, after statistically adjusting for all variables that might influence achievement, including ethnicity, social class, age, and number of years in the program. The data on two different tests—an

English proficiency test and a test of basic skills—showed no significant difference between TBE and ESL. Gains in English proficiency and reading, language, and math achievement were similar in both programs. But in 1987–88 the district was pressured by the California Department of Education to increase the use of the student's native language in bilingual instruction. A comparison of achievement test scores from 1987 to 1988 found that bilingual education had a significant and adverse effect on achievement in reading, language, and math. Despite the ESL pull-out students' participation in total submersion (not structured immersion) for nearly 90 percent of their school time, they achieved substantially more than their counterparts in bilingual programs.

One last question must be examined, one that is especially pertinent to the applicability of Berkeley's findings to other districts, such as Boston. What if Berkeley's bilingual programs were poorly implemented, or the ESL pull-out programs were atypically strong? Then the conclusions would not be generalizable. But Berkeley's bilingual programs had already been cited as exemplary by the California Department of Education. Rossell performed identical test comparisons between Berkeley's ESL programs and bilingual education programs in two other districts, San Jose and Fremont. The state department of education had identified Fremont's program as exemplary, and Fremont and San Jose were the only two districts cited by Stephen Krashen and Douglas Biber, in their 1988 book on bilingual education, to be outstanding in all regards.[39] The comparison found no significant differences between the reading achievement of Berkeley's LEP students and those of the other two districts. Berkeley LEP students, however, did significantly better in math than students in either San Jose or Fremont. In short, Rossell found no basis for the claim that the district operates a poor bilingual education program.[40]

By the same token, if the goal is English-language skills, then the Berkeley ESL pull-out is *not* an exemplary practice. In the ESL design, as Rossell notes, students are initially taught for no more than one-fifth of their day in English keyed to their current comprehension. The balance of their time is spent in the regular classroom, in the supposedly discredited submersion mode. It is a reasonable conjecture that if students were taught in English at a level appropriate to their understanding for most or all of the day, as in structured immersion programs, achievement in reading and English skills would dramatically outpace that of the TBE model. While the time on task principle is strongly suggestive, little is known about how structured immersion programs would perform in the United States because bilingual education advocates have consistently prevented their adoption.

Even ardent TBE advocates, however, concede that Canada's French immersion programs are successful on a large scale. Monolingual English speakers are taught entirely in French in the earliest grades and by sixth grade they are taught in English and French in about equal proportions. These students develop substantial French skills, and their English and math achievement is at the same level as students taught in English exclusively. Hakuta suggests that the proliferation of this method of bilingual teaching is a testament to its success.[41] Two-way bilingual education, in which English speakers also master the language of their LEP classmates, has also proven effective, though it is particularly costly. The Hernandez school in Boston offers two-way Spanish bilingual education and is highly regarded by parents and educators, although no one knows the program's effects on academic achievement in either English or Spanish of its LEP or English-speaking students.

## TBE ENROLLMENT IN BOSTON

The number of students in Boston's bilingual education program is increasing rapidly (Table 1). The largest language groups are Spanish, Haitian, and Chinese.[42]

TABLE 1
BILINGUAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN
THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1983–1992

| | 1983–84 | | 1987–88 | | 1991–92 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | | % | | % |
| Spanish | 3,986 | 54.2 | 4,477 | 54.2 | 5,428 | 56.3 |
| Haitian | 520 | 7.1 | 1,022 | 12.4 | 1,298 | 13.5 |
| Chinese | 872 | 11.9 | 980 | 11.9 | 1,049 | 10.9 |
| Cape Verdean | 541 | 7.3 | 653 | 7.9 | 857 | 8.9 |
| Vietnamese | 402 | 5.5 | 458 | 5.5 | 649 | 6.7 |
| Other | 1,035 | 14.1 | 672 | 8.1 | 365 | 3.8 |
| Bilingual Enrollment | 7,356 | | 8,262 | | 9,646 | |
| Total Enrollment | 54,468 | | 54,765 | | 58,263 | |
| % Bilingual | | 13.5 | | 15.1 | | 16.6 |

*Source:* Bilingual Education Department, Boston Public Schools, 25 February 1992.

The number of students in bilingual education programs statewide is also increasing. The Massachusetts Department of Education estimates that the number of LEP students in the state is increasing by 3,000 students per year. In 1990, the 50 districts with TBE programs reported a total of 36,427 students in 18 different language categories. Spanish speakers are by far the largest group, with 62 percent of the total TBE population. In 1987 there were 15,150 Spanish-speaking TBE students; in 1990 there were 22,540.[43]

TABLE 2
FTE TEACHING POSITIONS IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1986–1992

| | FTE Teachers | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regular | Bilingual | Special | Other | Total |
| 1986–87 | 2,721.0 | 456.5 | 781.0 | 299.0 | 4,257.5 |
| % | 64.0 | 10.7 | 18.3 | 7.0 | |
| 1987–88 | 2,709.5 | 480.5 | 835.0 | 344.0 | 4,369.0 |
| % | 62.0 | 11.0 | 19.1 | 7.9 | |
| 1988–89 | 2,642.0 | 479.5 | 863.0 | 388.0 | 4,372.5 |
| % | 60.4 | 11.0 | 19.7 | 8.9 | |
| 1989–90 | 2,480.5 | 504.0 | 887.5 | 352.0 | 4,224.0 |
| % | 58.7 | 11.9 | 21.0 | 8.3 | |
| 1990–91 | 2,392.2 | 509.0 | 929.0 | 322.5 | 4,160.7 |
| % | 57.5 | 12.2 | 22.3 | 7.7 | |
| 1991–92 | 2,368.5 | 537.5 | 946.5 | 410.5 | 4,263.0 |
| % | 55.6 | 12.6 | 22.2 | 9.6 | |

| | Change in FTE Teaching Positions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regular | Bilingual | Special | Other |
| 1986–87 | 143.9 | 9.5 | 30.0 | -9.0 |
| 1987–88 | -11.5 | 24.0 | 54.0 | 45.0 |
| 1988–89 | -67.5 | -1.0 | 28.0 | 44.0 |
| 1989–90 | -161.5 | 24.5 | 24.5 | -36.0 |
| 1990–91 | -88.3 | 5.0 | 41.5 | -29.5 |
| 1991–92 | -23.7 | 28.5 | 17.5 | 88.0 |

*Source:* Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 17 March 1992.

The number of bilingual education teachers increased commensurately. In Boston, the number of bilingual teachers grew by 32 percent from 1984 to 1992.[44] As with special education, the growth is at the expense of regular education programs. Over the same period, the regular education teaching force decreased by 203.6 FTE positions.[45] Meanwhile, the seniority system ensured that virtually no new teachers were hired for regular education programs. Only in bilingual and special education has the district hired teachers, as Table 2 illustrates.

Bilingual education is expensive. Advocates of bilingual education rarely consider its costs. But like special education, bilingual education is an entitlement program, and enrollment is rapidly increasing. This takes resources from regular education. Maximum bilingual class sizes are dictated by the *Lau* remedies, while teacher contracts set much higher limits for regular education class size. State regulations mandate a student-teacher ratio of no greater than 18 to 1, or 25 to 1 if an aide is assigned to the classroom.[46] Spending per student for bilingual education is therefore higher than for regular education. In Boston, the per-pupil instructional cost for bilingual education is $6,009 annually, versus $5,209 for regular education students.[47]

When bilingual education advocates propose program modifications, they seldom seem to consider the implications for non-LEP children. Ramirez et al. decry the lack of fluent English speakers in the second language acquisition programs they reviewed, and emphasize the importance of LEP children interacting with English-speaking students. But such classes are conducted primarily in another language, and the authors of the report offer no suggestion for how the fully English-proficient (FEP) student's loss of learning time would be overcome. The same problem applies to structured immersion programs, where the teacher sticks to simplified English. FEP students would learn less than their peers in the regular classroom.

While Hakuta acknowledges the lack of scientific evidence of TBE's effectiveness, he nevertheless argues that *all* students, including fluent English speakers, should be enrolled in two-way bilingual programs for their entire school careers.[48] As Howard Gardner has written, "When the evidence is the weakest—on the case for bilingual programs—[Hakuta] ends up drawing the strongest, and least warranted, conclusions."[49] Universal bilingualism, Hakuta argues, would reinforce social solidarity, convey a life-enriching asset, and allow LEP students to capitalize on their own natural resource.[50] But a national goal of bilingualism would not win broad support, and Hakuta does not address how the program's immense cost would be borne.

## CRITIQUE OF TBE

Criticisms have been made of transitional bilingual education; many are applicable to Boston's TBE program. They include overenrollment, the late exit to regular classes by TBE students, insufficient English instruction, inadequate preparation to participate in the mainstream economy, questionable claims of extra-academic benefits, and the charge that bilingual education is an employment system.

The number of students in bilingual programs in the United States is increasing dramatically. According to a 1980 study cited by Hakuta, the number of public school students in bilingual programs will have increased 35 percent by the year 2000.[51] If the trends of the last decade continue, 21 percent of BPS students will be enrolled in bilingual programs by then.[52]

Are too many children being placed in bilingual programs? According to one federal report, up to 60 percent of Spanish-speaking children placed in bilingual education programs have stronger English-language skills than native-language skills.[53] Misclassification has been highlighted in numerous federal reports. In Texas, one study revealed that students who spoke only English and were living with parents who occasionally spoke Spanish were classified as "limited-English." One survey of a Cherokee community showed that while 48 percent of the children were evaluated to be LEP, 82 percent knew *only* English. In a study conducted in California, only half of the Hispanic students labeled LEP were more proficient in Spanish than English.[54] The AIR study of 1977–78 concluded that less than a third of the students enrolled in bilingual programs had limited English-speaking ability.[55] A sample of school districts in California found that only half of the students categorized as LEP were in fact more fluent in their native language than in English. In one of these districts, 40 percent of the students classified as bilingual spoke no Spanish at all.[56] Similar surveys of other districts receiving federal funds for bilingual programs have found that many of the students identified for bilingual education do not need it. The consequences of these practices are disturbing: Children are rationed instruction in the basic English-language skills that afford them the best opportunity to thrive in the mainstream economy, instructional costs climb, and children are, in effect, resegregated by ethnic background.

Does Boston over-identify students for bilingual education as well? While no studies have been conducted, the state's eligibility criteria encourage overenrollment. Any children "who were not born in the United States whose native tongue is a language other than English . . . [or] who were born in the United States of non English speaking parents" and "who are incapable of performing ordinary classwork in English" are referred to the program.[57] Once a child is enrolled, the parent must write to the school committee before the child can be returned to the regular classroom. Since the enrollment criteria rely on the language of the parent, not the child, many children who are merely doing poorly in school may be referred to the program.

Are Boston students retained in bilingual programs too long? Are the programs succeeding in educating these children and in preparing them to lead productive lives? In 1990–91, the annual dropout rate for Hispanics was 19 percent, compared to 13.6 percent for blacks, 9.8 percent for whites, and 7 percent for Asians. The systemwide dropout rate was 13.1 percent.[58]

In 1985, Charles Glenn undertook an analysis of Boston's transitional bilingual education programs in an effort to understand why the schools were failing to educate Hispanic children. Glenn had worked aggressively for the state's pioneering bilingual education law, but had come to question whether the mandated instructional model of TBE was meeting the needs of the growing number of LEP students. Glenn noted that in the *Lau* ruling, the Supreme Court had stated,

> Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. . . . Any ability grouping or tracking system employed by the school system to deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority children must not operate as an educational deadend or permanent track.[59]

Was Boston's program operating as such an educational deadend? Student progress is measured by the four *Lau* "steps," gradual degrees of mainstreaming with their English-speaking peers. Of the 32 elementary bilingual programs, serving a total of 4,437 students, only seven had any students at the highest step, "mainstreaming with continuing support." Only 17 schools reported any students at the second highest step, "partial mainstreaming."

Glenn analyzed the status of each of the 1,485 students then enrolled in Boston's 16 middle school (grades 6–8) bilingual programs. Of the 1,485 students, 485, or one in three, had been in bilingual programs for *six* or more years. Fully 46 percent of the Spanish-speaking students had been in bilingual programs for six or more years.[60] In principle, these students should have been working half in English and half in their native languages in the second year of their schooling, mostly in English in their third year, and entirely in English thereafter. Yet after six or even eight years, they were still segregated in a bilingual program.

Of the middle school students who had been in bilingual education six years or longer, 37 percent were speaking their native language exclusively; in one school, the figure was 88 percent. Another 29 percent of the students were classified as speaking some English. Eight percent of students in bilingual education spoke English almost exclusively; in one school, 29 percent of students enrolled in bilingual education were speaking mostly English.[61] Forty-five percent of all students who had been in the program for six or more years were still at the first *Lau* step, i.e., in the bilingual program exclusively.

The data were equally disturbing at the high school level. At East Boston High School, 71 percent of all the students in the Italian bilingual program had been in it for eight or more years, though fewer than one in three were more fluent in Italian than English.

The situation was worse for students in the Spanish programs. Glenn concluded that it appeared that Boston's "bilingual programs both segregate them [Spanish-speaking students] *and* fail to teach a substantial proportion of them the skills which, according to the *Lau* decision, are essential."[62] These students are "educationally isolated far longer than contemplated by the Massachusetts Transitional Bilingual Education Law," because the program either fails to teach them English, prevents them from rejoining the mainstream, or both. Other students, Glenn concluded, especially Greek- and Italian-speaking students, are retained in the bilingual program for years, apparently despite their mastery of an adequate level of English skills.[63]

In 1982, Boston had attributed the large number of students remaining in TBE beyond its intended course to the "incidence of special needs students, the entry of older-previously-unschooled and illiterate students, and the registration of large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees."[64] Yet the proportion of special needs students (excluding those in private school prototypes) in bilingual programs (12 percent) was *lower*, not higher, than that of the district as a whole (19 percent). The second factor, the entry of older students with defective prior schooling, is irrelevant, since the middle school data cited by Glenn pertain to students enrolled in Boston schools since the start of their schooling. The last proposed explanation makes even less sense. The "Asian refugees" had in large part been in the system for three years or less, and Asian students were the most rapidly mainstreamed. Glenn concludes,

> It seems more appropriate to look for an explanation for the low level of English-language skills attained by a disturbingly high proportion of the students—and especially Hispanic students—in bilingual programs in Boston . . . in the teaching strategies employed and in the messages which (perhaps unconsciously) are given to students about the importance of acquiring these skills, rather than in the characteristics of the students themselves. . . . It will not do to assume that they are incapable of mastering a second language in six or eight years of schooling.[65]

Does Boston continue to retain students beyond the program's three-year course? Unfortunately, the department was unable to provide more recent data.

Since educators disagree about the goal of bilingual education, they differ on the significance of students exiting the program later than the nominal three years. Jim Cummins contends that while children can learn English for social uses ("playground English") quickly, five or more years are required to learn academic subject matter in English.[66] Many adults who have studied in foreign countries or taken foreign-language classes find the claims of bilingual advocates hard to reconcile with their own experiences. Late-exit bilingual advocates dismiss these perceptions as based on "middle-class" experiences and therefore not applicable to disadvantaged children.

Advocates of reforming bilingual education offer a different interpretation of the poor achievement of LEP children in Boston and other districts. They argue that children are denied adequate English instruction in TBE programs, stay in them too long, and consequently are woefully underprepared to return to the regular classroom. The requirement that students be reading at grade level before joining their English-proficient peers perpetuates the cycle. Many students do not perform at grade level even if English is their native language. If, as Rosalie Porter has suggested, six years of instruction in TBE classes does not prepare students for regular classes, it is time to try something else.[67] One Boston headmaster explained his policy:

> I believe that all kids, after three years, should be mainstreamed—unless you can have a bilingual plan written for them where there is a particular exception, because of a diagnosed particular need that is unusual, exceptional.

> I think here at the _____School we do a pretty good job of that, but we don't have to. . . . Students become bilingual or they put themselves in great jeopardy.[68]

Since only some schools house bilingual programs, the court has had to make some exceptions to its policy of racial controls on student assignment. As a result, some parents keep their children in bilingual programs for well over three years because they fear their children, once mainstreamed, will be involuntarily assigned to a remote school to satisfy district quotas:

> It's supposed to be transitional, three years, and no more, unless the parent wants it. Well, the parents' perception of the _____ School is that it's a great place to be, that it's safe. . . . And therefore you have this crazy situation: kids getting through fifth grade who are perfectly able to go into the regular class, but the parents balk because if you take them out of bilingual, they'll have to go to a school they are assigned to. That's the wrong reason for being in bilingual.[69]

The bilingual law is a vivid example of how an inflexible, state-mandated educational policy poorly serves both local districts and their clients. The product of political compromise, the law leaves everyone in bilingual education, to varying measures, dissatisfied. Bilingual advocates, like Dr. Sonia Nieto of the University of Massachusetts, admit that they never wanted the program to be "transitional" in the first place: Parents, Nieto claims, want their children to be taught in their native language. "We must redefine the mainstream so it includes us," she insists.[70] Many TBE administrators will therefore not be held to task for so many students remaining in the program beyond three years. Like Nieto, many Hispanic teachers favor late-exit programs. Yet they are neither licensed to implement the instructional model they believe in and demonstrate its merit, nor will they commit to faithfully implementing the TBE model and promptly transitioning their students. Indeed, proponents of alternative methods like structured immersion are threatened with the loss of state funding if they openly challenge TBE's effectiveness.

The ultimate loser is, of course, the child: His parents may never have signed on to the program's goals and his teacher's commitment to them may be lackluster. The instructional design to which he is subjected is incoherent, the product of bureaucratic compromise. Yet parental subscription, teacher commitment, and a clear mission are all prerequisites for effective education.

Another frequent criticism of TBE is that students receive insufficient English instruction. Common sense tells us that to become proficient in a language we must practice it regularly. What better way to master a foreign language than to live in a country where it is spoken, working to understand and be understood? The time on task findings confirm that the most effective language programs are those that immerse students in the new language. But in Boston, according to the bilingual education department, students receive only ninety minutes a day of English instruction. Aside from occasional courses in art, music, or physical education, they are kept segregated from their English-speaking peers.[70] One headmaster expressed his frustration:

> One of the things I wanted to do this year was to decrease the number of courses that students get in their native language—instead of giving them one period of English, give them two periods. I had the Hispanic parents up here all over me about that: "Why are you doing this? These kids need their Spanish. This is their culture." But we are in the United States where they should be learning English. "But you are being insensitive, Mr. _____." I said, "They take one English class out of seven periods per day. They need more than that. . . . That is like my learning French for one period a day: I'm not going to learn it. . . . In order for me to become fluent in Spanish I had to go and meet people who were Spanish speaking. . . . If you don't do that, you are not going to learn. There is no mystery. It's like learning to play an instrument; you have to stay on it. You can't stop. If you stop shooting baskets, you don't become a good basketball player."[71]

Students who enroll in schools without TBE programs for their language groups often learn rapidly in the mainstream. As one principal observed,

> The only bilingual program we have is Spanish, but we do have kids that are Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, and Chinese. And you know, there's no one [else] that speaks those languages, so those kids are totally immersed and learning fast.[71]

Another principal criticized the district's policy of retaining students in "transitional" bilingual programs. She described how her transitional kindergarten program, by switching early to all-English instruction, successfully mainstreams children by the first grade:

> What's prevalent in Boston is that the children go to a "bilingual school." They go to a school that has all grades from K through 5 bilingual. And the child goes from grade to grade in the programs—ends up staying in bilingual for five years, and sometimes six, unnecessarily, past the time that he or she needs to be in it. Our [bilingual] children are in kindergarten, and the growth they've made in the English language is just incredible. Their teacher spoke to them primarily in Creole with a little English [early in] the school year. She's now speaking to them entirely in English and they recognize the words. She'll have them again next year as five-year-olds [for second year kindergarten]. They will be ready to go into our [regular education] grade one.[72]

Critics argue that TBE students lack the necessary preparation to participate in the mainstream economy. It is plainly unfair to deny LEP students the opportunity to master this country's language of public discourse and influence. Latino bilingual advocates often argue that Spanish-speaking children need very little English to function in certain urban neighborhoods or regions of the country. But, as Porter asks, should Spanish-speaking children aspire to no more than this?[73] While all languages and dialects may be equal in some abstract sense, Noel Epstein has noted, "they certainly are not equal in the political, economic or social sense, whether one is referring to English dialects among English-speakers, Spanish vernaculars among Spanish-speakers, or minority languages in the general society." Standard English is no better, only more useful, to master in this country. To deny children the right to learn the primary language of the land as quickly as possible is to deprive them of their civil rights.[74]

By removing bilingual children from the regular classroom and limiting their exposure to English, we have resegregated the schools by language, and, as a consequence, by race and ethnicity. Many LEP children are eventually placed in regular education, having never learned English adequately. They often end up failing and being referred to special education or to the lowest academic tracks. According to one middle school principal,

> Very few kids graduate from a bilingual program. I try to mainstream as many kids as possible, because if kids can master the written language and the spoken language skills to be able to be mainstreamed before they go into high school, they have a much, much better likelihood of graduating. Kids who go into high school in the bilingual program, es-

> pecially in the ____ School, are much more likely to drop out. There's a much greater emphasis on kids turning sixteen and getting jobs right away.[75]

Bilingual education advocates emphasize "empowerment" and "self-esteem." Yet truly empowering language-minority students would entail at least offering them the choice to intensively study the language that opens the door to a future in this country. In its current form, bilingual education actually reduces, rather than expands, access to future jobs and schooling.

Advocates of bilingual education claim its benefits extend well beyond English proficiency and include improved academic achievement, enhanced self-esteem, increased community involvement in education, and reduced dropout rates. But has TBE in fact accomplished these goals? The evidence is mixed. Alternative programs, were they permitted, might do as well or better. One indication that TBE does not improve academic achievement is that, as discussed above, students in TBE programs showed *less* gain in mathematics than students in structured immersion programs: Keith Baker and Adriana de Kanter concluded, in their review of the literature, that 14 percent of methodologically sound studies found TBE to be superior to submersion, 21 percent found it inferior, and 64 percent found no difference.[76] In comparison tests of TBE and English-only programs, students taught in Spanish were no more committed to school and learning, nor did LEP students taught in English manifest less self-pride or suffer from anomie or emotional distress.[77]

The Massachusetts Advocacy Center claims lower dropout rates for Boston students in bilingual classes than for their regular education peers of the same language group (1987–88 data).[78] A 1990-91 analysis by the BPS Department of Research and Development found that for four language groups—Chinese, French, Haitian, and Spanish—the annual dropout rates were lower than for students of the same language groups in regular education classes. But for all other language groups, the annual dropout rate was *higher* in bilingual programs than in regular education. Even for the four bilingual programs with lower rates, the difference was surprisingly small—less than four percentage points.[79]

Several facts should be noted. First, the rate is very high in both groups and the difference is slight. Second, TBE offers small class sizes with a mandated student-teacher ratio of 18 to 1. The privilege of small classes may alone account for these small gains. If the teachers' familiarity with the child's native language accounts for any remaining advantages of TBE, this benefit would accrue to structured immersion and other alternative LEP programs as well. Third, the lower dropout rate compared to children of the same language group in regular education may in part testify to TBE's *in*effectiveness: TBE children who have inadequate English skills may drop out on rejoining the mainstream.

Charges have been made that bilingual education is an employment system and that politics sullies the hiring of bilingual teachers in Massachusetts. While TBE's stated goal is to teach students English and mainstream them with their English-proficient peers, Rosalie Porter and others have charged that TBE administrators often hire Spanish-speaking teachers from their own cultural group with little regard for the teachers' English-language skills. For a time, activist administrators, intent on teaching the native language and culture at the expense of English instruction, gained control of the tests for bilingual teachers. Teachers were rigorously tested on their knowledge of native history and culture, but their English skills were ignored. Non-Hispanics with strong Spanish skills were thus excluded in favor of Hispanics who were weak in English.[80] Boston's Department of Bilingual Education claims that teachers are now assessed in both English and their native language.[81]

The state's certification requirements for bilingual teachers are another example of the folly of the state's bilingual program.[82] State law requires that bilingual teachers have a thorough knowledge of native language and culture, but only "communicative skills" in English. Yet if research on academic achievement, and not employment politics, informed the law, these requirements would be exactly reversed. Three different studies have found no difference in the achievement gains of LEP children taught by monolingual (English only) and bilingual teachers.[83] More remarkable still, another study found an *inverse* correlation between teacher competency and student performance. As Rossell and Ross have observed, this is because teacher "competency" is largely a measure of the teacher's skills in the native language. By this standard, "incompetent" teachers would use more English in class than "competent" teachers.[84] One principal of a school with a popular Spanish bilingual program said,

> I think there needs to be a much greater emphasis on the English-language fluency of bilingual teachers before they enter the system. Otherwise you end up with bilingual teachers who can't speak English themselves, yet are responsible for the English proficiency of their kids. I also think, though, that there needs to be a lot more work done on cultivating respect for, and acceptance of, linguistic differences.[85]

If employment politics result in the district's hiring of teachers with poor English skills, how will their students obtain the language instruction they deserve? Once employed by the district, bilingual education teachers' interest in job security is inevitably at odds with the goal of rapidly moving students into the mainstream—an objective that teachers may never have subscribed to in the first place.

## MULTICULTURALISM AND THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The controversy over bilingual education is part of a larger debate over "multiculturalism," "ethnocentrism," and "Afrocentrism" in city schools. Few educators question the need for schools to pay significant attention to non-Western cultures, histories, and languages. In an increasingly diverse American society and an interdependent world, there is surely need to broaden the account of our nation's past to include the contributions and perspectives of all the diverse peoples that continue to forge our American identity. Much has already been done in Boston and other large districts to establish a multicultural curriculum. Great gains have been made in the accurate and sensitive treatment of the nation's minorities in textbooks. California undertook a comprehensive revision of its statewide curriculum, developing entirely new multicultural textbooks. New York State has adopted what is probably the most radical and controversial new curriculum, which explicitly aims to cultivate self-esteem in African-Americans. Some critics charge that it blatantly sacrifices historical accuracy and denigrates the country's Western European traditions in advancing its Afrocentric perspective.

Any history is inevitably nuanced, but certainly only the extremist contends that only blacks can write the history of slavery, or Native Americans that of early America.[86] To throw over any attempt at critical distance or factual truth in the curriculum in favor of a new ethnic subjectivity would be to do children a great injustice. All knowledge is not socially constructed. Children must learn the difference between education and sentiment; "before they are taught to feel, they must be taught to know."[87] The most extreme proposals are unlikely to win broad support. Sociologist Nathan Glazer has done well to remind us that this is not the first time that public school curricula and texts have been revised to accommodate the perspectives of ethnic groups, nor likely the last.[88]

If the goal is both to improve the educational opportunities for all children and to defuse racial and ethnic tensions, the best hope is to offer parents choice—the choice to send their children to schools that cater to their priorities, yet further the public interest embodied in the core curriculum. The district, the state, and the judiciary would do well to learn the lessons of the failed social engineering of the last decades. Despite tireless efforts of state and local officials, busing and other mandates have not improved educational quality for people of color. There is no need for policymakers to choose among multiculturalism, Afrocentrism, and assimilation. While each claims persuasively to be the best way of improving educational opportunity for students, no one approach is best for all. The best policy is for the district to let each new school determine its own mission and values, and to resist the urge to say what will and will not go.

Certainly diversity should be valued in the classroom but should children be discouraged from learning the ways of the mainstream culture? The schools have traditionally been the path for children of immigrants to a better life. How will the hardening of ethnic boundaries and the segregation of children by language group lead to a more equitable society, or provide access to improved economic and educational opportunities?

Students must understand the American disease of racism, but, as Arthur Schlesinger has argued, public education should seek to strengthen, not weaken, the bonds that hold our nation together.[90] He reminds us that the reason the United States has avoided the destructive forces of ethnic separatism and dissolution that are undermining the republics of the Soviet Union and elsewhere is that it has so successfully assimilated the cultures of immigrants into a new, and continually evolving, American culture. Schlesinger warns us of the "danger of a society divided into distinct and immutable ethnic and racial groups, each taught to cherish its own apartness from the rest."[91] Indeed, he writes, the alternative to integration is disintegration.[92] The balance between *pluribus* and *unum* must be maintained.

As long as education remains under direct political control, there is little likelihood that schools will be free to realize these distinct missions. This problem is most visible in the acrimonious debate over bilingual education programs. Activists have fought vigorously against alternative educational methods that rely less on the native language. Their primary goal has been to reinforce ethnic identity, but because they could not win public support for this objective, they have feared to argue their case on these terms. As Linda Chavez has noted,

> They fear—correctly, I believe—that public financial support for bilingual education would evaporate if it were presented as a way to preserve the language and culture of a

> single ethnic group. It is not even clear that Hispanic parents would support bilingual education on such terms. Instead, advocates try to sell the program with the claim that it is both effective in teaching Hispanic children English and necessary to allow Hispanic children to keep up in school as they learn the language. . . . No other ethnic group, including the 250,000 immigrants who come here from Asia each year, is clamoring for the right to have its language and culture maintained in this country at public expense. Although Hispanics have succeeded in doing so—for the time being—theirs will be a Pyrrhic victory if it is gained at the expense of their ultimate social and economic integration.[93]

Some Hispanic leaders have seen officially mandated bilingual education as an opportunity to institutionalize and legalize their political struggle. Dr. Antonia Darder of California Polytechnic University contends that bilingual programs have been bastardized by the mainstream's emphasis on rapid transition into English-only classes. Speaking at a conference titled "The Education of Latino Children," Darder said, "We should name the problem for what it is! It's racism! We must rethink educational priorities, advocate for our children to become themselves, not engage in the rhetoric of compromise or appeasement."[94] Her anger is understandable. What could be more embittering than professing allegiance to one primary goal—the rapid mastery of English and early exit from the program—but in truth struggling for another—the inheritance of the native language and culture, and the longest possible retention in the program? They are as fundamentally incompatible as assimilation and separatism.

But is not teaching native cultures a function far beyond the traditional mission of the public schools? It is also a function for which a centralized government program seems particularly ill-suited. Should government's responsibilities, through the agent of the local schools, be ceaselessly expanded as other institutions of society weaken? Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus were the first to suggest that the decline of "mediating structures" between the individual and the government, including families, neighborhoods, churches, fraternal and voluntary associations, and ethnic and racial subcultures, was in part the unintended result of the expansion of government programs. Many current policies have vigorously upheld both individual rights and government action to further social justice, but have either been blind or inhospitable to the many agencies that mediate between the two.[95] In the areas of health, welfare, and education, many social services were once provided by such agencies. Now they have been taken over by centrally managed government bureaucracies or transformed into quasi-governmental agencies through governmental licensing, certification, funding, and regulation.[96] Berger and Neuhaus contend that "public policy should protect and foster mediating structures," which they see as vital in a democratic society.[97]

If they are right, then the expansion of the public school's agenda is ill-advised. It may only weaken already disadvantaged communities. Organizations outside the schools can better fulfill the goals of maintaining the native language and celebrating the native culture. When local or state bureaucracies undertake to create multicultural materials, as Linda Chavez has argued, the history and customs of distinct peoples are homogenized. After all, it is only in the United States that "Hispanics" exist; the culture of Argentina is quite different from that of Mexico.[98]

There are many local community organizations offering classes in native language and culture: Hebrew schools, Chinese Saturday schools for instruction in Mandarin as well as dance and poetry, Lithuanian schools for language and culture, and Hispanic after school programs, to name but a few.[99] The promotion of ethnic solidarity is best left to members of the community, who are unconstrained by bureaucratic rules and the politics of society at large.

## CHOICE AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

There is ample doubt that Boston's current TBE program is meeting the requirements of the state's regulations, which state that TBE programs "shall be designed and conducted so that students enrolled in such programs can achieve skills in . . . English sufficient to perform ordinary classwork in English within the three-year transitional period."[100] One headmaster remarked,

> The goal is for kids to come in and stay a couple of years and then mainstream into regular education. They often don't. We have kids who remain in bilingual until they graduate. Some of these kids don't need it. The parents keep saying, "I want them there." . . . There is nothing I can do to get them out. . . . There needs to be more decision making on these issues at the school level.[101]

The Fifth Court of Appeals held in *Castaneda v. Pickard* (1981) that if a "school's program . . . fails, after being employed for a period of time sufficient to give the plan a legitimate trial, to produce results indicating that the language barriers confronting students are actually being overcome, that program may, at that point, no longer constitute appropriate action as far as that school is concerned."[102] Charles Glenn, as early as 1985, called for choice in LEP programs to improve the educational opportunities of language minority children:

> What may be needed above all is *flexibility* in developing a strategy to meet the educational needs of linguistic minority students, a strategy which will certainly include transitional bilingual education but which will provide long-term language maintenance in the native language only for those whose parents choose that. . . . And we will need the flexibility to be able to discuss what is in the best interest of students . . . without making unqualified support for the present system of bilingual instruction the test of good faith. While it is true that some institutional interests may appear threatened by such discussion, in the long term bilingual education itself can only benefit from taking its place among the freely chosen educational options in a . . . system which respects diversity.[103]

And what about TBE's clients? The little-known fact is that an extraordinary number of children in TBE programs today are in the wrong program either because they are proficient in English or because their parents would prefer less native-language instruction or none at all. In examining the Ramirez report, Rossell found that less than *half* of the kindergarten students enrolled in the TBE and immersion programs were considered to have only a beginning knowledge of English.[104] Furthermore, 41 percent of the parents of the children in early-exit TBE programs either wanted their child taught mostly in English, with Spanish to clarify, or only in English, according to a parent survey administered by Ramirez et al.[105] A 1988 survey of Latino parents conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) found that only 19 percent approved of the school teaching their child a non-English language if that meant less time for teaching English. Moreover, only 19 percent would accept less time for math, and only 20 percent would support less time for science, if that were the consequence of teaching another language.[106] A large majority of parents thought it was the family's responsibility, not the school's, to teach children their ancestors' history and traditions. Puerto Rican and Mexican parents were the most likely to place the responsibility with the school.[107] Because parents have different views on the matter, the ETS report urges flexibility in program offerings: "To the extent that schools attend to parent preferences in their program development, it would appear that this study would call for some options in the types of special services available to language minority children."[108]

Not every LEP child will wish to maintain his native tongue, nor should lawmakers or the courts force him. As Rossell has argued, parents should be free to reach informed choices, recognizing that the school day is finite and tradeoffs must be made between mastery of English, maintenance of the native language, instruction in other subject matter, and education in native culture. The consumers of education would be protected: Each program's goals and the means used to obtain them would be clearly stated, and program outcomes fully disclosed.

With 145 different language groups in the nation's schools, it is impossible for one program to satisfy everyone's needs.[109] Choice can resolve the policy problem that no amount of further research or political debate can.

Before we can judge a program's effectiveness, we must first ask, effective at what? After all, a program's effectiveness will be greatly influenced by the degree to which it is driven by a singular mission to which its participants subscribe. As we have seen, there is reason to believe that subscription to the current programs, in the absence of choice, is low. Transitional bilingual education programs may have been unusually effective in initial sites where they were carried out by educators who believed in the program they had developed. However, research has shown that the primary reason later sites rarely replicate a project's initial success is the lack of spirited ownership on the part of participants. Choice, by replacing rule making with commitment, can greatly improve the odds of success.

Choice will also free educators to state their program's priorities clearly; real and stated missions will be one and the same. Is the goal of their TBE program truly transition or is it maintenance of the native language? Is the native language used to keep children from falling behind in other subjects or to create functional bilinguals? Is self-esteem to stem primarily from ethnic validation or from academic accomplishment? Is the greater imperative to reinforce the home culture or to prepare the student for new opportunities outside of it? As Rossell has written,

> Parents . . . should be told the truth about bilingual education and its goals. A bilingual maintenance program is offered not because it is the best way to learn English, the objective of the federal and state legislation, but because it is a good way to become bilingual, and there are parents who want their child to be bilingual. . . . The case for bilingual education should not have to rest on its effectiveness

> in teaching English, but on its effectiveness in making children bilingual. The bilingual advocates have confused these two goals.[110]

Wherever choice is established, programs will gain character and clarity. Program designs that have been compromised would be purified, as Porter has suggested. "Progressive" educators will bring language into the classroom and emphasize an ethnocentric curriculum. Activities and lessons will stress the child's background, folklore, and emotional response. "Pragmatists" will concentrate on making the mainstream language and culture accessible to the underprivileged and stress literacy and demanding subject matter. Still others will contend that the best of both approaches can be combined.[111] In the end, the choice will be made by parents, and will be a deeply personal one.

## LEP EDUCATION IN BOSTON UNDER CHOICE

If educators could launch distinctive schools in Boston and parents could choose from among them, parents of LEP students could opt for transitional bilingual education schools, structured immersion schools, or two-way bilingual schools. Other schools might design still different pedagogies. Schools would be required to provide children with the English skills they need to function in American society. This would be accomplished through the core curriculum. All schools would participate in assessments of English proficiency. The non-English language curricula would be regarded as curricular extensions, just like specialty schools' music, art, health care, business, and other programs.

Funding for the new schools would be by capitation, just as for the other entrepreneurial schools, but with a per-student supplement, since LEP students are more costly to educate. Schools offering LEP programs could admit regular education students, but at the usual rate.

To permit the new entrepreneurial schools to establish a diversity of LEP programs, the state must first amend the current bilingual education law, Chapter 71A. The law's guarantee of special assistance to language minority students should be sustained. But rather than mandate a particular instructional model, the law should give districts the flexibility to design programs that best meet the needs of their community. The federal government has already recognized the need for such flexibility: The Bilingual Education Act of 1988 directs up to one-quarter of federal funding to TBE alternatives.[112]

Were new schools free to offer such alternatives, and parents free to choose relatively short-duration (and thus less expensive) programs, the district would realize substantial savings that would then be available to strengthen regular education. According to one estimate, if all students exited after three years of TBE classes, $760,000 could be saved annually.[113] If children who are stronger in English than in their native language were enrolled in the regular classroom, the savings would be greater still. Boston's language minority parents are ready to make such choices. As one principal explained,

> Our Hispanic students . . . have shown incredible gains as a result of having been in the McCormack School's two-way mainstream program. That's what you want: You want to have people zealously trying to get their kids in. On the other hand, with that popularity comes real responsibility. I'd like to be able to say that the school department is always supportive of this success. That has not been the case.[114]

Perhaps no program better exemplifies the failure of political control of urban education in Boston—and more vividly reveals the gains in both student achievement and teacher satisfaction that true school choice would deliver. No program better underscores why Boston's staff—teachers and administrators alike—need the freedom to come together "by choice, not assignment" to teach the way they believe is right.

## ENDNOTES

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*READ PERSPECTIVES* reports on new research and provides wider distribution to published works focusing on educational opportunities for limited English students in the United States.

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**INSIDE:**

A Review of the U. S. GAO Study on Limited-English Students
– *Rosalie Pedalino Porter*

A Critique of California's Evaluation of Programs For Students of Limited-English Proficiency
– *Robert E. Rossier*

Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority Students: Findings From a Naturalistic Research Study
– *Russell Gersten*
– *Thomas J. Keating*
– *Susan Unok Brengelman*

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# READ PERSPECTIVES

A Publication of The READ Institute

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# READ THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN ENGLISH ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

READ is a national research organization which specializes in the support, distribution and promotion of independent research on the acquisition of English-language literacy and on effective schooling for language minority children.

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# INTRODUCTION

Assessments of three significant studies comprise the current volume of *READ Perspectives.* In keeping with our on-going practice of publishing new data on the education of limited-English students, two of the studies cover recent research on programs and demographics while the third study provides a detailed review of practical, exemplary teaching strategies. Both types of information are useful to school administrators, teachers, scholars, and the large and rapidly growing community of language minority citizens.

Of immediate importance, these new data solidly support the insistent demand being voiced now in state legislatures and in Washington that substantial changes and improvements are urgently needed in the education of language minority students. The GAO study defines the problems and their scope; the California study candidly recognizes the lack of evidence for the superiority of native language instruction as beneficial to limited-English students; and the Special Alternative Instructional Programs study presents solutions in the form of successful, workable programs. Attention in each study is now rightly directed not to imposing one-model-fits-all regulations but to demanding clear evidence of student success.

## THE GAO STUDY

The first study here reviewed was conducted by the U. S. General Accounting Office at the request of the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. Its title suggests the focus of the study: *Limited-English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts.* Data collection includes fresh demographics on the dramatic increase of immigrant and limited-English students in U. S. classrooms; on where these students are concentrated, and on the burgeoning variety of languages and national backgrounds represented in this population—the study thus provides valuable data for educators and policy makers that is not always easily available. Of particular interest as well is the detailed analysis of five representative school districts with rapidly growing LEP populations and the problems that are common to them all. Indeed, the problems highlighted in the five districts studied by the GAO are prevalent in public schools with limited-English students across the nation.

While the GAO study provides a needed overview of the serious issues confronting U. S. public schools and the degree to which these problems have increased in severity in the past decade, some of its findings are disappointing since they do not convincingly grow out of the data collected or rest on sufficient evidence. For example, the authors state that they will not address the question of which teaching method—bilingual or non-bilingual—is most effective but then they assert that native language teaching programs are preferable to other methods, a recommendation that is not supported by the reliable research studies in the field. (Baker-DeKanter, 1981; Gersten, 1992; New York City Public Schools, 1994) Even so strong an advocate for native language programs as Professor Kenji Hakuta of Stanford University admits that, "an awkward tension blankets the lack of empirical demonstration of the success of bilingual education." (Hakuta, 1986)

Curiously, the study does not at all address the costs of different types of bilingual education programs, even though "cost" is part of the study's title. However, a national study of the costs of bilingual education, state by state, has just been completed and will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives.* (ALEC, 1994)

## THE CALIFORNIA STUDY

Rossier's critique of the California state study, *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity: An Evaluation of Programs for Pupils with Limited Proficiency in English,* finds severe flaws in this two-year study of the quality of education in the state with the largest number of limited-English students in the nation. Authors of the California study focused their data collection and analysis on the years 1989-1991, although bilingual programs in that state have been in place for 18 years.

There are several problems with the California study that receive close attention in Rossier's report. The makeup of the study committee, its attention to "political considerations," the questions it chose (or did not choose) to investigate—comprise central aspects of the evaluation plan that resulted in a less than satisfactory final report. In the end, the California study reveals a number of crucial problems in the education of over a million limited-English students in that state: lack of evidence for the superiority of native language instruction as beneficial for LEP students; lack of accountability in the assessment and documenting of student progress; retention of language minority students in bilingual programs longer than necessary.

Rossier's sternest criticism of the California evaluation is that it does not carry out the task set out by the legislature, namely, to answer this central question: What is the most productive and cost effective program for helping LEP students to become fluent in English as the means of gaining access to an equal educational opportunity in our schools? California is not alone in ranking low on the accountability standard as far as LEP students are concerned. Massachusetts, which passed the first state law in the U. S. mandating bilingual education in 1971, has still not consistently collected student achievement data. As a bilingual/ESL program director in that state, I have heard the evasions and excuses for 24 years. A state commission on bilingual education has issued new guidelines on accountability "as soon as suitable tests are developed," but this announcement rings hollow if past performance is any indicator. (Bilingual Education Commission, 1994)

## THE SPECIAL ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS STUDY

William Tikunoff and his associates, under the auspices of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), published the first extensive survey of successful English-language intensive programs in U. S. public schools in 1991. Tikunoff's meticulous research on teaching and learning is highly regarded by professionals in the field of language minority education. The novelty of this particular work lies in the fact that almost no account heretofore has been taken in educational research of programs for LEP students that do not use native language teaching. From 1968, when the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) was first passed, to 1988, 96 percent of federal funding for demonstration projects and research studies went to native language teaching programs, with a meager 4 percent allotted to programs concentrating on English language teaching. The funding formula was revised in 1988 and "Special Alternative Instructional Programs," as these English-teaching programs are designated by OBEMLA, are now allocated 25 percent of Title VII funds.

Tikunoff and associates selected nine school districts with well-documented success in educating limited-English students and, through careful observation of classrooms and examination of school records, present the reader with detailed data on what works. How do these particular schools in suburban, rural and metropolitan settings manage to teach their LEP students English rapidly and effectively and to teach school subjects in English to students from many different language backgrounds? The study supplies the answers to this central question in language minority education by describing the program features in each school that contribute to positive outcomes for LEP students.

Of greatest value to teachers and school administrators, Tikunoff et al. focus on practical techniques and strategies that teachers use to promote learning. For teachers of LEP students there is the dual challenge of teaching English language literacy—reading, speaking, writing and understanding—and the teaching of school subjects such as mathematics, science, and social studies in English. As a former teacher of bilingual students and program director, I judge the Tikunoff study to have practical utility. It lays out a blueprint for building solidly efficient English-language based instruction for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The key to success is the application of the lessons gleaned from the Tikunoff research: restructuring of schools to respond more flexibly to language minority students' needs for higher levels of English proficiency and the need for broad staff training in how to merge English language development with content area instruction.

All in all, we are presented with a richly provocative range of material in the three studies reviewed in this volume.

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.
Editor, *READ Perspectives*

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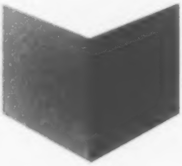
# A REVIEW OF THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE STUDY ON LIMITED-ENGLISH STUDENTS



# A REVIEW OF THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE STUDY ON LIMITED ENGLISH STUDENTS

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.

The General Accounting Office, the U. S. government's watchdog agency since 1921, conducts studies in all areas of government activity at the request of members of Congress. The findings from this agency's reports are routinely cited by lawmakers in deciding whether to initiate, support, revise or cancel programs. The degree of its influence can be gauged by the fact that federal agencies accept three fourths of its recommendations and Congress follows more than half of its suggestions for legislative action. *(New York Times,* October 17, 1994, 1, B10)

## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The GAO study, *Limited-English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Educational Challenge Facing Many School Districts,* published in January 1994, was commissioned by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources. The task was to collect data on the impact of immigrant children and limited-English-proficient (LEP) children in U. S. public schools, specifically those children ages 5-17 whose knowledge of English is so limited that they need special help to benefit from classroom instruction in English. The study addresses these four questions:

1. What are the characteristics of LEP students, nationally and in selected districts, and the challenges districts face in educating these students?

2. How do selected districts with LEP students from linguistically diverse backgrounds educate these students, including the extent to which academic subjects are taught in the students' native languages?

3. What approaches have been identified as promising when diversity of languages spoken by students makes native language instruction difficult?

4. Do key federal programs targeted to LEP students provide the types of support that districts need to implement programs to serve these students?

The data collection was conducted from July 1992 to July 1993 and includes fresh demographics on the national trends in school age enrollments of LEP students as well as a close analysis of five representative school districts with large LEP populations.

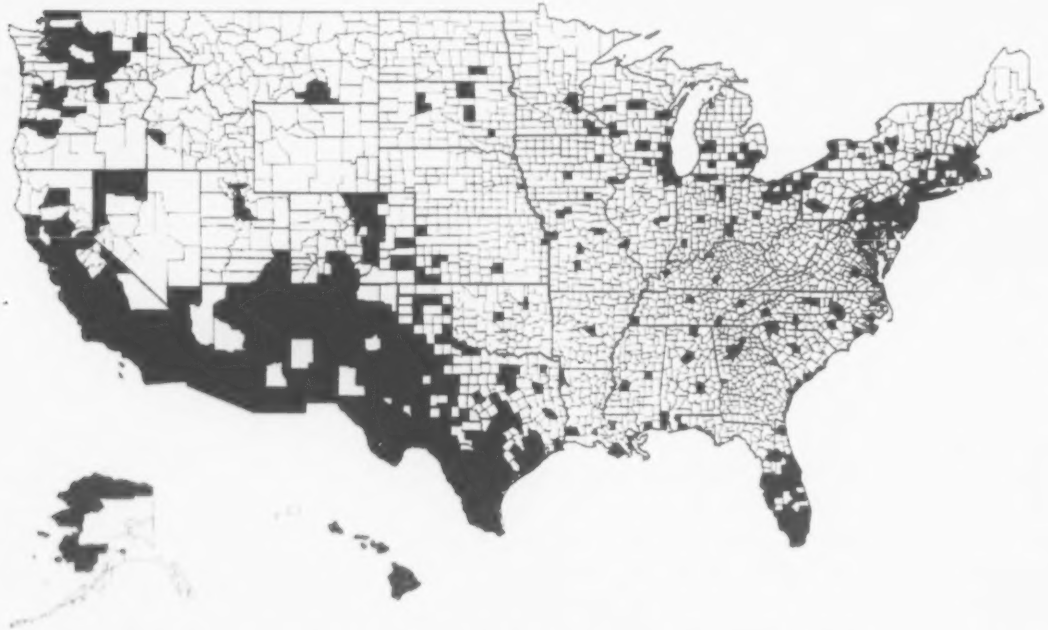
## A CHANGING SCHOOL POPULATION

The study's statistical data on the dramatic increase of immigrant students in U.S. classrooms between 1980 and 1990, on the explosive increase in the number of languages and national backgrounds represented in this population, and on the areas where these students are concentrated is valuable information for educators and policy makers that is not always easily available. (GAO, figure 1, 6-7) The federal government's ten-year census, for example, collects data on less than 15 non-English languages spoken by U. S. residents, while the GAO study discovered school districts where 90 different home languages were represented among the LEP students. Although 72 percent of LEP students nationwide are concentrated in only six states—California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Texas—about one-third of the counties in 47 states have substantial numbers (500 or more) of LEP students. (GAO, 5)

The population of limited-English students in U. S. public schools has increased by 26 percent between 1980 and 1990, a much greater increase than the general school population, and now numbers between 2.3 and 3.5 million students, according to GAO estimates. (GAO, 34-35) LEP students represent a growing proportion of students, making up 5.2 percent of all students nationally (up from 3.2 percent in 1980) but in the 25 largest urban school districts, LEP enrollment has risen from 9 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1990. Although Spanish is still the first language of the majority of LEP students in the U. S. (60 percent), limited-English students in most schools represent, on average, 5 or more different languages. In the sample schools studied by the GAO, the numbers were even higher, with 13 to 90 languages represented. (GAO, 34-35)

One intriguing fact is mentioned only briefly and never explained: immigrants account for only 43 percent of the limited-English students in our schools. Indeed, the GAO includes in this percentage children born in the U. S. to immigrants who arrived in the last ten years. Are 57 percent of the limited-English students native-

Figure 1
More than 500 counties have substantial numbers of LEP students



Shaded areas indicate the 533 counties in which at least 5 percent or 500 students were LEP, according to 1990 decennial Census data.

Source: GAO Report *Limited English Proficiency*

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born and, if so, why are such large numbers not fluent in the common national language? Even allowing for the fact that some part of this number may be students from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and officially citizens of the United States, the 57 percent figure is baffling. It is reasonable to speculate, therefore, that some number of these students may be inappropriately identified as "limited-English," as has been documented in studies such as Rossell and Baker (1987). No fully satisfactory explanation is apparent for the fact that such a high proportion of limited-English students are not immigrants. In a private conversation with one of the GAO regional managers, I was told that the agency has not found an agreed upon definition of what a "limited-English" person is and that they have included in this category children who speak English but may not read and write it well enough for school work. If this is the case, then there may be a large number of students who are wrongly enrolled in programs where they are being taught in another language when what they urgently need is remedial help in reading and writing in English.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM FIVE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS

The five representative urban school districts visited and described by the GAO auditors yield an invaluable picture of schools undergoing radical changes in student make-up and in the efforts being made to supply an appropriate education for these students. Figure 2, prepared from data in the GAO report, maps the student changes in the five districts.

Certain problems are common to all five districts and, indeed, are known to be prevalent in public schools with limited-English students nationwide:

- immigrant students are almost 100% non-English proficient on arrival in U. S. schools

- the arrival of limited-English students is unpredictable and occurs at different times during the school year, causing major upheavals in classrooms and educational programs

- some middle and high school age students lack schooling in their native land due to unsettled conditions and are, therefore, pre-literate in any language

- a high level of family transiency and poverty exists, both of which negatively affect children's academic development

- parental involvement in or understanding of students' schooling is lacking

- there is an acute shortage of bilingual teachers and of native language texts in dozens of languages, as well as poor quality of Spanish language texts and lack of student assessment instruments

- funds are inadequate to train teachers or to develop programs.

Figure 2
Limited-English Proficient Students in Five Districts and Their Proportion of the Total Enrollment, 1982-1992

| | TOTAL ENROLLMENT | | LEP ENROLLMENT | | | | NUMBER OF LANGUAGES 1992** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| District | 1982 | 1992 | 1982 | % | 1992 | % | |
| A | 193,701 | 197,413 | 24,021 | 12.40% | 39,569 | 20.0% | 7*** |
| B | 12,963 | 11,998 | 1,256 | 9.90 | 1,427 | 11.8 | 12 |
| C | 46,752 | 73,647 | 3,092 | 6.60 | 20,937 | 28.4 | 88 |
| D | 24,565 | 28,739 | 4,395 | 17.80 | 7,108 | 24.7 | 57 |
| E | 57,498 | 74,084 | 7,815 | 13.50 | 24,093 | 32.5 | 37 |

* Percentage of the total enrollment
** Number of languages present in 1982 was not available for the most part
*** District A reported 60 additional languages but documents specifying those languages were not available. They reported 94% of LEP students as Spanish speakers and 2400 students speaking other languages.

Prepared by R. P. Porter from data in GAO report.

## GAO BIAS

This study, while stating that it will not address the issue of which instructional method—bilingual or nonbilingual—is most effective, does in fact weigh in heavily on the side of native language instruction as preferable to other educational approaches. This attitude is subtly present throughout the report and reflects the GAO bias noted on the publication of its earlier study, *Bilingual Education: A New Look at the Research Evidence (1987).*

Early in the current report we find this statement: "A substantial body of research points to the effectiveness of bilingual instruction; many educators believe it is preferable to non-bilingual instruction for educating LEP students, both for teaching English and for teaching academic subjects while the student is learning English." (GAO, 4) A few pages later, we read: "One study, funded by the Department of Education, identified exemplary programs that use these promising nonbilingual approaches. This study suggests the potential effectiveness of these approaches, but many experts—including one of the study's authors—caution that these approaches should not replace bilingual instruction, if such instruction could otherwise be provided." (GAO, 12) To support this judgment, the GAO study cites only a few studies authored by professionally recognized advocates of bilingual instruction. It is, in fact, widely known in the field that research on the effectiveness of bilingual instruction is of generally poor quality and that reliable studies do not prove any superior benefits for teaching LEP students in their native languages, either in the rapid acquisition of English or in the learning of school subjects. (Danoff, 1977; Baker and De Kanter, 1980; El Paso Study, 1992)

The GAO report does not provide readers with the balanced, objective presentation that we should expect from an agency with an oversight function. It is not the mission of the GAO to promote certain policies, in this case an adherence to the largely unsuccessful but politically popular bilingual programs implemented since 1968. A recent study of the GAO itself by a panel of experts from the National Academy of Public Administration, a nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to increase the effectiveness of federal, state and local governments, stated the following: "Some in Congress have expressed concerns, which the panel shares, that GAO has on occasion moved too far into advocating policy, pushing into policy formulation more appropriate to elected officials." (*New York Times*, 1)

## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The GAO report briefly cites the study of nine school districts with exemplary English-based programs in addressing the question of which alternative educational approaches appear to be effective when native language instruction is not practicable. (Tikunoff, 1991) Since the Tikunoff study is reviewed in detail in this volume of *READ Perspectives*, it needs no further discussion here. The GAO report, for its part, catalogues the serious impediments to the full implementation of native language instruction: large numbers of different languages, lack of trained and credentialed teachers fluent in all these languages, lack of published teaching materials in all these languages, lack of assessment instruments in all these languages for monitoring academic progress, and lack of funding to train teachers working with LEP students. Yet, in spite of the inescapable conclusion that teaching every LEP student in his or her native language is impossible and the fact that there are effective, exemplary methods for helping LEP students to acquire the English language and learn school subjects taught in English, the implication strongly conveyed by this report is that every effort should continue to be made to implement full bilingual programs.

## ADEQUACY OF FEDERAL FUNDING

As to the question of the adequacy of federal programs to provide the types of support that districts need to serve these students, the GAO reports on the three principal sources of funding for LEP students. These sources are the Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA), a federal program with an annual budget of $30 million (1992) that provides aid as an entitlement to local districts with 500 or more immigrant students who are in the U. S. three years or less; Title VII, 75 percent of whose approximately $200 million (1992) budget is given to school districts on a competitive grant basis while the remainder funds nine different state and national activities (i.e., technical assistance, graduate fellowships, evaluation); and Title I, the federal program providing remedial reading and math support for low income students.

Title VII and EIEA funding have not kept up with inflation in recent years and the high rate of increase in the numbers of LEP students means that federal funding for these children amounts to less per student by about 40 percent over the past decade. However, it is important to note that the bulk of financial support for bilingual students is not from the federal government but from state and local sources and always has been. The GAO report does not provide data on the cost of any type of bilingual program, information that would be useful in considering the investment needed for different levels of native language or ESL (English as a Second Language) or immersion programs. Cost analysis and student achievement data from the five school districts visited, as a representative sample of what needs to be invested and what outcomes are likely, would be the must useful information for school administrators, legislators and parents of LEP students. (A national survey of the cost of bilingual education has just been published by the American Legislative Exchange Council in Washington, DC, and will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives*.)

The U. S. Department of Education has recommended that Title I programs should be open to limited-English students. (February 1993 report) Until recently, Title I remedial programs offering reading and math tutoring to low achieving students from low income families have provided these services to a limited percentage of LEP students. In 1993, for instance, only 35 percent of limited-English students received Title I services. LEP students were excluded from this tutorial program by a narrow eligibility criteria that admitted only students suffering from "educational disadvantages stemming from causes other than language." (GAO, 14-15) As a veteran classroom teacher and assessor of students with special learning problems, I would say that this distinction is very difficult to determine. Children from backgrounds of poverty, unstable families, chaotic living conditions, speaking no English, arrive in our schools with a constellation of problems that result in low achievement in reading and math. Why separate out only the language element to make some of these children ineligible for needed assistance? Finally, in the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, new guidelines were added to Title I giving LEP students access to remedial tutoring in reading and mathematics without restrictions.

Limited-English students are classified as being from low-income families at a rate that is more than twice that of the general population (37% vs. 17%). (GAO, 8) That fact, and the expectation that LEP students are at a temporary disadvantage academically until they master enough English for classroom work, makes their need for Title I services sufficiently convincing. Programs with federal mandates, such as Title VII, Title I, and Special Education, unfortunately, spawn bureaucracies that guard their borders tenaciously by promoting the impression that only certain students "belong" to them. Great improvements in the education of disadvantaged children could be made if there were more effective coordination and cooperation among these educational fiefdoms. The National Advisory and Coordinating Council on Bilingual Education, in its annual report to the U. S. Congress, argued strongly for such collaboration in an essay by council member Dr. Leo Lopez. (NACCBE, 1987) The Seattle Public School District has developed a very promising "blended" model for enriching the education of needy students across program boundaries and this program will be reviewed in the Fall 1995 issue of *READ Perspectives*.

## ASSUMPTIONS OF THE GAO STUDY

Much useful information is contained in this study by the GAO, especially the detailed description of the five representative districts (2 in California, 1 each in Massachusetts, New York, and Texas) and the particular elements that make the education of limited-English students across the country such a challenging proposition. It is disappointing, though, that the report writers have made some of the same unsupportable assumptions that are routinely presented by advocates of extended native language instruction. The assumptions are these:

1. That bilingual instruction is more effective for the teaching of English and of academic subjects. Over the past 20 years several reliable studies have shown that bilingual instruction is not superior to other teaching approaches for either second language acquisition or content learning, i.e., Danoff, Baker-DeKanter, Ross and Rossell. Two new studies now add to the empirical evidence: *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity,* the 1992 study evaluating programs for LEP students in California, and *Educational Progress of Students in Bilingual and ESL Programs:* A Longitudinal Study, 1990-1994, New York City Public Schools. The California study is reviewed in detail in this present volume yet two arresting conclusions in it are worth highlighting here: (1) the study finds no one educational model, bilingual or non-bilingual, to be the most effective under all conditions, and (2) California public schools do not adequately monitor the academic progress of LEP students, therefore, the state and public cannot hold schools accountable for LEP student achievement. One can hardly credit such a denial of responsibility after 20 years and the billions of dollars invested in California's bilingual education efforts. The New York study, which will be examined thoroughly in the Fall 1995 READ Perspectives, compares the achievement of two large groups—one group in bilingual and one group in intensive ESL programs—with superior outcomes on all counts for the students not receiving native language instruction.

2. That it takes 3-7 years to become fluent enough to do good work in an all-English language classroom. The first-hand experience of teachers across the country is that LEP students can begin to learn subject matter taught in English within a few weeks of entering U.S. schools, given a modified curriculum and trained teachers. This conclusion is strongly supported by recent studies such as the El Paso immersion project, the 1988 Dade County Study, and the 1994 New York City Public Schools study, to name a few. It may take 3 years or longer to become a near-native speaker, reader and writer in a second language but students certainly do not need to wait for that level of proficiency before they begin learning school subjects taught in the second language. I can report with confidence that in my five-year experience as a bilingual teacher I found it possible and preferable to teach subject matter in modified English to limited-English students, successfully, within a few days of their enrollment in school.

3. That ESL is only "a grammatically based method used to help LEP students learn English," suggesting that academic support must be provided in the native

language of LEP students or "they will fall well behind their English-speaking peers over the several years it takes to become fluent in English." (GAO, 3) That is definitely not the case. LEP students greatly benefit from academic support given in English for it helps them to develop their second language as well as learning subject matter. This strategy, called "Content-Based Language Teaching" or "Sheltered English Content Courses," has been strongly promoted by experts in the ESL field for years and tens of thousands of teachers have been trained to use these methods. It is one of the most promising, cutting-edge, approaches in the education of language minority students.

4. That implementing an alternative, English-intensive program would be costly and require many years to develop. Compared to the costs and time needed to implement a full bilingual program—essentially setting up entirely separate schooling—the development of an English-intensive program requires a relatively modest investment. The models—ESL, Sheltered English, Immersion— are available, and can be initiated with a concentrated amount of teacher training and curriculum modification (see Glossary of Terms, p. 50). While various schools across the nation are experimenting with alternatives that use more English and less teaching in the native language, many more school districts are held back from making such changes by lack of information, by state laws mandating only bilingual programs, or by political pressure to conform to the bilingual imperative.

A description of one exemplary working model, "The Newton Alternative to Bilingual Education," appeared in *The Annals*, March 1990. Another noteworthy example of a successful alternative to native language instruction is the El Paso Public Schools' immersion project. A five-year study, published by The READ Institute in 1992, compares the performance of LEP students in an English immersion program with students in a traditional bilingual program. Immersion students, who are taught everything in English from the first day of school, learned English better and faster and scored higher on district tests of school subjects than their peers in the bilingual program. Most important, bilingual program students needed 6-7 years to achieve skills to enter mainstream classrooms compared to immersion students who were successfully mainstreamed in 3-4 years, no longer needing special services. (READ Institute has been providing program development assistance to a number of school districts across the country, districts that had full bilingual programs for years and were disappointed with student achievement.)

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overwhelming need to improve access to a quality education for limited-English students so they can survive in the nation's increasingly competitive job markets calls for a massive effort in training (and retraining) teachers to deliver the vital English language and academic support. The numbers of immigrant and limited-English students are growing at a far more rapid pace than the native-born, English-speaking, school population. These demographic changes are expected to continue throughout this decade and beyond. Although Spanish speakers continue to make up an average of 60 percent of all limited-English students, most school districts also enroll children from dozens of other language backgrounds. Tightening of school budgets makes it much more difficult to provide funding for special programs and makes it imperative that districts carefully review these special efforts, in student achievement as well as in cost effectiveness. The following recommendations develop naturally from the accumulated data in the GAO report:

1. Train teachers—All teachers, not just special ESL or bilingual teachers, need some training in how to help LEP students to learn language and subject matter. Courses to provide this training should have been offered through undergraduate and graduate programs for teachers years ago. Because language minority children have been thought of as "belonging" only to bilingual teachers, it has not happened. Integrating LEP students successfully with their English-speaking peers in mainstream classrooms depends on much broader training of all school personnel. I recently taught a course at Westfield State College titled "Educating Language Minority Students," for example, which covered the essentials of second language acquisition, teaching strategies and materials, language testing, and cultural sensitivity in one semester.

Dr. Fred Genesee, president of the international TESOL organization (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), in the January 1995 *TESOL Matters* argues persuasively for the crucial necessity of close collaboration between ESL and classroom teachers. He closes with the wise admonition that "the ultimate goal of teaching ESL to non-English speaking students is to give them the benefits of a challenging and comprehensive general education, not simply to teach them English."

2. Develop Alternative Programs—Because there are numerous different languages represented in the LEP population and because there is no convincing research evidence for the superiority of native language programs, it is time for an attitudinal change among educators and program planners. The GAO study highlights the lack of bilingual teachers all over the country as well as the lack of textbooks in all

the languages. Surely it is time to concentrate more effort and resources on programs that can be staffed more readily with trained teachers and on suitable textbooks in the target language, English, and to stop chasing the chimera of native language instruction for over 90 different languages. The crucial point that is often glaringly absent from the discussion of education options for LEP students is the fact that the status of being "limited-English" is truly a temporary condition. Students living in an English-speaking country become adept at the majority language in time, they are not consigned to a permanent state of speaking only their mother tongue. Public schools in the U.S. must organize themselves to respond with measures that will rapidly remove this temporary language barrier rather than operating as if "limited-English" were predetermined to be a long-lasting condition.

3. Collect Comparative Data on Program Outcomes—Although it was not within the scope of its study, I urge the GAO, if the data is available in the five districts surveyed, to publish the following information: What are the results in English language learning and mastery of subject matter for the students receiving bilingual instruction compared with students receiving special English instruction or with students receiving no special help at all? How many years do the students require special help in each program type? How do high school drop-out rates compare? What percentage of students in each program was retained in grade or referred for Special Education?

There is great value in reporting such information when groups of students in the same school district are being compared while receiving different treatments. No amount of description of schools and their special features is useful without an account of how successful the students are as a result of all this effort. It is for this reason that the New York City Public Schools study of October 1994 is so valuable. It compares student achievement among two distinct groups—one receiving only ESL from kindergarten and the other group receiving native language instruction for several years—and reveals the outcome in student performance.

4. Restructure OBEMLA Funding—For twenty-five years, OBEMLA has apportioned most of its funds, through competitive grants, to native-language intensive bilingual programs. I recommend instead that the major part of OBEMLA funding be distributed, on a per capita basis, directly to all school districts with immigrant/LEP students, on the Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA) model. Local districts are most capable of deciding their own priorities for these students and even of pooling some of their resources in regional collaboratives. OBEMLA

could impose firm guidelines as to the use of these funds for teacher training, development of materials and assessments.

What works best is the adaptation of models to local circumstances and the availability of experts to train local staff in the use of strategies and materials compatible with local curriculum and system-wide goals. The best action the federal government can undertake is to redirect some of the present OBEMLA funding to local districts to support these efforts. It is in these training activities that OBEMLA funds could be doing the most good for all school districts that have LEP students. From my own experience as a program director, I found the EIEA funds to be extremely beneficial because they gave us direct support for what was needed to strengthen our particular program. We used these funds for teacher training, curriculum development, support for a multicultural preschool for 3 and 4 year old LEPs, development of LEP student assessments, and workshops for Title I and Special Education personnel on immigrant/LEP issues.

5. Avoid Segregation—The word does not appear in the GAO study and yet segregation is one of the most damaging drawbacks of bilingual programs—the segregation of LEP students by language and ethnicity for most of each school day over several years. In the five districts studied, the percentage of LEP students ranges from 13% to 30%. Are these students better served in programs where the school continues the "linguistic isolation" of the home? Integrating these students with their English-speaking classmates as much as possible is crucial to the early and rapid development of the language skills they need to do their very best in U.S. schools.

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# A CRITIQUE OF CALIFORNIA'S EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS OF LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

# A CRITIQUE OF CALIFORNIA'S EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS OF LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Robert E. Rossier, Ph.D.

There can be little argument about what an evaluation should do: It should measure or assess the worth or quality of something having notable or intrinsic interest. An educational evaluation, more particularly, should reveal the value of instructional methodologies or applications—that is, it should answer the question of how well an educational program or treatment meets the needs and goals ascribed to it.

No educational initiative needs more comprehensive and objective evaluation than California's bilingual education system, a 20-year effort to meet the needs of the nearly 20 percent of the state's students who do not know enough English to do regular school work. Yet, this giant instructional system for limited-English proficient (LEP) students—the largest in any state in the U.S.—is inadequately assessed in the contracted study titled *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity: An Evaluation of Programs for Pupils with Limited Proficiency in English.* (1992) Instead of determining the question of value—how well are limited-English students progressing linguistically (learning English) and educationally (mastering school subjects)—the study shirks its overriding responsibility to appraise results and clearly report them.

Data collected over a 2-year period (1989-90) show generally poor results for bilingual education programs in California, but the study too easily attributes the disappointing outcomes to lack of sufficient resources without considering the possibility that it is even more likely the fault of the unsound theoretical foundation upon which bilingual education rests.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bilingual education programs were mandated under California state law in 1976 and the number of students enrolled in these programs has grown dramatically from year to year. The 1992 official California Department of Education census showed a total of 1,078,705 limited-English students in the state's schools and, based on the rate of past growth, this figure probably approaches 1,250,000 today, or nearly one in five school children. Nationally, California far outranks all other states in the number of LEP children. Almost half of all limited-English students in the country are enrolled in California schools, and they represent more than 150 different language backgrounds.

In 1988, one year after the state legislature allowed the bilingual education law to expire and refused to renew it, the legislature ordered the California Department of Education to contract for an evaluation of services provided to the state's limited-English students. Curiously, or perhaps revealingly, the Request for Proposals sent to prospective bidders for the evaluation contract called for the two-year study to be "a comprehensive assessment of bilingual education programs." (*Meeting the Challenge*, Preface, i) This statement seems to indicate that the California Department of Education was most interested in examining only "bilingual" programs, although the completed study did, in fact, review five different types of programs—three bilingual and two non-bilingual.

Because the greatest number of limited-English students are in the critical elementary grades, the study focused on those years. Only ten per cent of the funding was allocated to examination of secondary level instructional programs for LEP students.

The legislature was particularly concerned that the study provide:

1. a description of exemplary programs for LEP pupils that used distinct models widely discussed in political debates and in the research literature and

2. information to determine which model for educating LEP pupils is most effective and cost effective (*Meeting the Challenge*, 2)

It is the second objective—that of determining the most effective program model—that poses a particularly serious problem. In order to determine the effectiveness of an educational program, it is necessary to know what type of learning the program is supposed to bring about—to know, in other words, for what purpose the program was established.

The intent of the legislature in authorizing the establishment of special programs for LEP students was described for local school districts on August 26, 1987 in a series of advisories by the California Department of Education after the state Bilingual Education Act expired. The "general or intended purposes" were taken from the legislative findings and declarations of the original bilingual law, which the Department of Education cast into eight "requirements" that school districts had to meet.

Of these eight requirements, the first and most important specified that "the primary goal of all [bilingual] programs is, as effectively and efficiently as possible, to develop in each child fluency in English." (Honig, 14-15) Several of the other requirements dealt with the question of using the pupils' native or primary languages for academic instruction. None of these subsidiary requirements, however, gave to primary language instruction the pre-eminence accorded to the development of English language skills. In enacting the original Chacon Moscone Bilingual Bicultural Act in 1976, the legislators clearly intended that every limited-English child in the state must become fluent in English in order to gain access to the school curriculum on an equal footing with native speakers of English. Legislators viewed the use of different languages in teaching school subjects as a possible strategy "when necessary" (no explanation was given as to when it would be necessary) and only if the parents of the limited-English student decided to exercise the option of placing him or her in a bilingual program. (Honig, 14)

## POLITICAL INFLUENCE

One would hope that the design and administration of instructional programs in the public schools would be as free as possible from political considerations. Public education should serve the best interests of the students in each local district and not the special interests of any group within the schools or in the larger community. Unfortunately, we know that the schools are not immune to political influence, and *Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity* provides clear evidence that this is so.

There are several direct references in the evaluation report to political considerations. One of these references has already been mentioned but bears repeating: The desire of the legislature to have research done which addresses a variety of concerns, including "a description of exemplary programs for LEP pupils that use distinct models widely discussed in political debates..." (*Meeting the Challenge*, 2) (emphasis added) Should political debates be used as a standard for determining the selection of instructional approaches?

In the report's acknowledgement of the assistance of persons other than the team of eight people who conducted the study, reference is made to the Advisory Committee whose advice to the team provided "valuable feedback [which] was always grounded in both the reality of schooling for LEP students and the political reality of the state." (*Meeting the Challenge,* Acknowledgements) (author's emphasis)

There is little doubt that this "political reality" was forcefully inserted into the evaluation report in large measure through the efforts of the pro-bilingual education activists on the Advisory Committee. Their contribution is implied if not fully acknowledged: "The most active members of the Advisory Committee contributed ideas, commented candidly on our analysis, and literally helped shape the direction of the study; they were truly 'participants' in this evaluation." (Acknowledgements)

Who were the activists who helped shape the direction of the study? Of the thirty-one members of the Committee, at least five have a long history of lobbying in the state for primary language (bilingual education) instruction. Two of this group are past presidents of the California Association for Bilingual Education, the chief lobbying group for bilingual education in the state; another is in the Bilingual Office of the California Department of Education, and the other two are directors of bilingual programs, one of a large city school district and the other of a county school system.

Of the remaining twenty-six Committee members, seven are employees of the State Department of Education who, therefore, are unlikely to be at odds with department policy. Eleven are state employees who were selected for their special expertise in areas such as finance or teacher credentialing rather than having knowledge about the education of language minority students.

None of the Committee members has ever taken a public position on behalf of reforming the state's programs for limited-English students or of giving more equitable support to a variety of different programs for these pupils. The deck appears to have been stacked from the beginning.

The influence of the bilingual activists was felt early on in the study with the downgrading of the question of determining the most effective instructional model. Instead of effectiveness, the description of exemplary models was given primacy: "a major purpose of the research was to identify and examine schools which were providing exemplary programs for their language minority students." (*Meeting the Challenge*, 3) The public (and the legislature) had assumed that the evaluation would determine—at least to some extent—whether primary language instruction or English-based instruction is more often effective in helping LEP students' school performance. But this determination was completely avoided because, as the evaluation's authors commented, "the challenge of educating LEP students is much too complex to be reduced to such a simplistic formulation." (p. 3) So, rather than looking for program features that produce good learning results for students across many school districts, the evaluators focused on a small number of schools they identified as "exemplary."

At this point, the authors made another decision of major consequence. Six different instructional approaches were identified as being in practice in the state. Of the six, the so-called "submersion" model was excluded from the study because it was not considered to be a special identifiable program. According to the authors, "submersion" merely represents a situation in which the limited-English student is placed directly in a mainstream classroom where English is the language of instruction and is given no special help in overcoming the language barrier or in learning school subjects. "Submersion," in this context, is a loaded term that carries negative connotations. It signifies that the emphasis is on learning a second language, English, to the exclusion (or submersion) of the primary or home language. Yet some of the studies reported by Baker and DeKanter show that in some districts LEP students in mainstream classrooms learned English and mastered school subjects better and faster than comparable students in bilingual classrooms. (Baker, 1983)

*Meeting the Challenge* concedes that submersion is probably the most commonly used of the six identified approaches. This occurs in many school districts because there are too few students speaking the same language to warrant the establishment of a special bilingual program.

The decision not to track and assess the progress of LEP students placed directly in mainstream classrooms reflects a narrow, behavioristic view of second language learning held by both the evaluation team and the Advisory Committee. Instead of recognizing that the learner plays a major role in the learning of the new language, they operated on the belief that it is the program and the teachers' implementation of it that are paramount. Because submersion is more a play on words than a specially-designed instructional program, it is assumed by some to be an educationally negative experience for LEP students to be assigned to mainstream classrooms.

But is this always the case? Over the years there has been much anecdotal reporting of the rapidity with which students learn English and school subject matter in just such situations. Currently, linguists are interested in what is called negotiation in second language acquisition: the learner "negotiates" meaning through contact with native speakers of the target language. The evaluation team recognized this in their report. "The classroom observers also took note of the extent to which LEP children and EO (English only) children were integrated in classes. We asked them to do so because the literature suggests that LEP children may benefit from living models of spoken English provided by their interactions with native English speaking students." (p. 168)

At another point, in describing various instructional practices, the team observed: "There was a deliberate effort to mix the children from different language backgrounds. This was apparently quite effective. The students were forced to interact with other children in their second language [English]." (p. 174)

## INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS EVALUATED

Of the five instructional models selected for the study, three were identified as bilingual: Bilingual Late Exit, Bilingual Early Exit, and Double Immersion, also called Two-Way Bilingual (see definitions in the Glossary of Terms on page 50). In each of these models, the native language of the student is used for classroom instruction some part of the school day. The early and late exit models differ only in the number of years the student spends in the program. All three bilingual approaches teach literacy skills in the primary language first, before going on to teach reading and writing in English. Double Immersion or Two-Way programs include native speakers of English as well as LEP students, with the goal of helping both groups to learn to speak, read and write in two languages.

The other two models, English as a Second Language (ESL Pull-Out) and Sheltered English, concentrate on the early and rapid acquisition of English and do not teach in the student's native language. Of these two, ESL has a much longer history in the schools and, therefore, is better known. ESL is not an academic subject to be taught as such but rather is a cover term that refers to any number of techniques that promote the rapid learning of English for academic and social purposes. The most widely used ESL approach in practice today is still the Audiolingual

Method, since many language teachers were trained when this method was popular in the 1960s and '70s. The ALM approach employs a mechanistic use of grammar drills and rote learning, applying the principles of behavioral psychology. Many new language teaching methods have been developed under the broad title "communicative approach," with the goal of teaching language for oral and written communication in real life, academic and social situations. The most promising strategy that applies to the education of language minority students, content-based ESL—using school curriculum as the content of English language lessons—is increasingly used in ESL classrooms as teachers across the country are trained in this method. A considerable body of research shows that when content and language instruction are carefully integrated, students can successfully learn school subjects while at the same time advancing their learning of English.

Sheltered English is a version of content-based ESL most commonly used with limited-English students at the junior or senior high school level. Sheltered English classes may be titled "ESL Math," "ESL Science," or cover other subjects. What they provide is a class in a required subject designed solely for limited-English students and taught by a specially trained teacher. The evaluation report lists some of the techniques used in Sheltered English classes to help students understand the subject matter: liberal use of visual materials, cooperative learning strategies, words paired with objects, reduced English vocabulary, repetition, dramatic activities, and modeling of English. Certainly some of these techniques are not entirely new but are, in fact, methods that have been used by successful teachers in many situations and not only with second language learners.

It is important to return once more to the question of instructional variety raised earlier: If the evaluators recognized that LEP students benefit from being in situations that require them to interact as much as possible with native speakers of English, why did they exclude submersion from their evaluation, the one situation that affords these students the maximum opportunity to interact in English? While it is true that LEP students in a mainstream classroom without special help are not in a special program, it is also true that they have available to them two of the most important elements in language learning: the motivation and the opportunity to use the new language in meaningful contexts. It would have been of great practical value, in a state where such large numbers of students from so many language backgrounds are involved in an evaluation, to make comparisons between students receiving each of the special treatments and students receiving no special help.

In linguistically integrated classrooms, LEP students find the motivation and have the opportunity to interact in English with teachers and English-speaking classmates; however, in classrooms in which the native language is used for instruction most of the day, there is no motivation to use English. Even when instruction is given bilingually—alternating between English and the primary language—it has long been recognized that students favor their first language and actually "turn off" instruction given in English because they know a translation will soon follow. Moreover, the same psychological principle comes into play with productive language: if the students know that the teacher is bilingual, they will make little effort to speak English in response to his or her questions or directions. For rapid and efficient learning of a second language, it is the interaction between students in a mixed language classroom and in extracurricular activities that is essential. When students know that their teachers are not familiar with all their languages, these students are quickly motivated to learn to communicate with each other in the common language of the school, the playing fields, the library and the cafeteria.

## TRANSLATION

Although the authors of this report occasionally showed some insight into the second language learning process, they soon resorted to their advocacy of primary language instruction. One example of this vacillation is the use of translation with LEP students.

The authors cite one school in which English and Spanish were used on an alternate-day plan. (p. 172) On the day on which English was to be used, one teacher would sometimes translate the lesson into Spanish to insure that the students would understand it. The authors point out that there has been much criticism in the literature of this practice and add, "The danger is that the students will learn that if they do not understand, the translation will follow. This lessens motivation to process the second language." (p. 172)

The reaction of students in avoiding the difficulty of comprehension in the second language when they understand that the message will be comfortably translated for them by someone else is well known to language teachers and others who work in bilingual situations. It appears, however, that many educators and some of the more influential members of the evaluation team ignore the problems caused by translation because they are principally concerned with promoting native language instruction to assure the maintenance of the native language rather than with the mastery of English by LEP students. In commenting about the prolonged mixing of Spanish and English in the instruction in a fifth grade class, the authors declared: "Nonetheless, there are other possible reasons to continue the use of Spanish, including the desire to maintain the language in the students' repertory and the need for those students who were migrants to continue to use their Spanish." (p. 172)

## PRELIMINARY PROCEDURES

After the selection of the instructional models to be studied, the evaluation team had to decide whether the study should concentrate on typical or exemplary programs. While they realized that the choice of exemplary programs would preclude the generalization of the study's findings, they decided, nevertheless, to study exemplary programs rather than those that were judged to be only "effective." (p. 15)

The next step was to ask nominators to name schools that met criteria set up for "well implemented" programs. (p. 16) The following criteria were applied:

1. Each site had to be nominated by a minimum of two, preferably three, people who knew but were not a part of the program.

2. Every program selected had to have characteristics that conformed to the expressed goals, methods, and key design parameters of the approach followed by the program.

3. Teachers at a chosen school had to be trained to implement this kind of program and to have the requisite skills (for example, a bilingual program without certified bilingual teachers could not qualify).

4. Student data had to be collected regularly and be available, making it possible for research to assess the program's effectiveness. (p. 16)

By means of interviews with knowledgeable individuals, starting with the California Department of Education and working down through five levels to the local schools, the team identified sites for possible study. At this point there was a pool of 52 districts and 133 schools. The pool was considered to be "geographically diverse" and contained all of the five instructional approaches previously selected. It was also diverse in the size of the schools as well as in the number of languages and their concentration. (p. 17)

By using the four criteria listed above, the pool was reduced to 21 districts and 48 schools which were considered to be well-implemented. Finally, the numbers were further reduced to 11 districts, 15 schools, and 45 classrooms in what was called an "intensive sample." Of the 15 schools in this sample, four were Bilingual Late Exit, three Bilingual Early Exit, two Double Immersion, three ESL Pull-Out and three Sheltered English.

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

For educators, legislators, and other interested persons who are seriously concerned with the progress of language minority students, a quick reading of the first paragraph of Chapter 3 is most disconcerting. The authors initiate the discussion of the assessment of LEP students by stating that Chapter 1 of the evaluation had "foreshadowed the critical message from the evidence to be discussed in this chapter." (p. 25) The crucial message was that "Comparable data are not available to assess the progress of LEP students toward the goals of English language proficiency and of academic achievement." (p. 25) This is not an isolated statement; throughout the report this message is repeated several times. As the purpose of the evaluation was precisely to determine the progress of the students toward specific goals, one is compelled to ask what value the legislature received from funding the study. If the California Department of Education had not collected achievement data on LEP students for the eighteen years that the Bilingual Education Act was in force, is it unreasonable to expect that they would collect such data for the two year duration of this evaluation? Reasonable expectation or not, this failure to report on student progress is the most glaring flaw in the California evaluation.

The language proficiency tests used by the selected schools included the Bilingual Syntax Measure, the Language Assessment Scales, the Idea Oral Language Proficiency Test, and the Bilingual Index of Natural Language, all of which are described and critiqued in the report. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, a standardized test administered in many school districts across the country, was used to measure scholastic achievement. Major causes for the lack of comparable data for the instructional models are listed as "variation, inconsistency, and limited amount of local testing; student transiency and low attendance; and low validity and unreliability of the tests." (p. 31)

While absenteeism and transiency are considered to be the most important causes, the reasons for the inconsistency of the testing are given special scrutiny and are characterized by the authors as being "more covert, often times unspoken, [and] usually not listed in any policy document." (p. 37) One of these reasons has to do with the heavy burden of work supposedly placed on the Resource Specialist teachers who, besides their regular teaching assignment, are given responsibility for the testing of the LEP students. Because their time is severely limited, these teachers "sometimes choose to teach students rather than test them." (p. 37)

The authors imply that the special funding that districts receive for their LEP programs can be a factor in the desire of the teachers not to carry out testing mandates: "District funding, and to a degree, individual school funding, is partially determined by the number of LEP children being served. State funds designated Economic Impact Aid (EIA/LEP) are allocated to small and medium sized school districts according to the number of LEP students enrolled. Every limited-English child who is reclassified to non-LEP or Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) status represents a potential reduction in funding. "We have been told that some teachers who know that the student continues to need supportive instruction even though he/she is reclassified are reluctant to formally change the status of the student." (p. 37)

Although a direct charge is not made by the authors of the report that school districts, teachers, and administrators consciously refrain from testing for reclassification so that funding will not be reduced, this conclusion is strongly suggested. As a teacher and researcher in California for many years, I can state, from personal experience, that there has been much unofficial talk that testing of LEP students is avoided and that they are retained in bilingual programs beyond their needs.

Further, the authors of this study too readily impute a benign motive to teachers who are reluctant to test and reclassify their students. If teachers do not test, how can they know what supportive instruction is still needed? How do teachers know that their students will not fare better in mainstream classes in which they have the opportunity to refine their English as well as to learn fundamental subject matter?

Another cause of inconsistency in testing LEP students may be what the evaluators discerned as a reluctance of some administrators to record LEP student test scores that might lower a school's test averages. The evaluators mention that "A number of administrators that we interviewed believe that some schools report scores of LEP students separately, and that other schools simply do not test the children at all." (p. 38) Moreover, they state that while "No schools in our sample articulated a no, or limited, testing policy...privately some school personnel suggested that other schools do have such an implicit policy." (p. 38)

In summing up this section, the authors attribute the negligent student assessment practices to "the fact that overburdened school personnel find few, if any, incentives for testing LEP children after the initial assessment for program entry has been conducted." (p. 38) They add that "it is not surprising that many students may wait years to be formally retested for program exit and that many others may never be reclassified, going on to the middle school still bearing the LEP label." (p. 38)

There are all kinds of incentives for teachers to carry out their basic duties but it would seem that honesty and the desire to fulfill one's responsibilities and to keep faith with the students should be at the top of the list. This should be especially true for those bilingual teachers who receive extra stipends of from $600 to $5,000 per year, as many in California do. (p. 96)

In a section headed "Reclassification," the declining number of students being judged "Fluent English Proficient" and, therefore, ready to exit from special bilingual programs is addressed. As this trend to retain students in bilingual education is occurring at the same time that there has been a tremendous surge in LEP enrollments, the legislature has been concerned about the impact on schools. Once again, limited time for testing due to the complexity of the program is identified as a major cause. Another reason that may be more important is explained as "the perceived importance of reclassification to the program." (p. 40) Apparently, some schools and districts view reclassification as being discretionary.

The authors consider the failure of a school to evaluate students periodically for their readiness to leave bilingual programs and enter mainstream classrooms "may be grave, limiting their options at the secondary level." (p. 42) At the same time, they warn that an early exit from the program could cause problems for these students and cite the writings of Ramirez and Cummins in support of long stays in bilingual programs, five to seven years. (Cummins, 1981; Ramirez, 1991)

After reviewing its data on reclassification, the evaluators conclude that the use of reclassification rates is not a valid measure of program effectiveness and, therefore, "some—perhaps most—current testing practices may serve neither the evaluators who seek to monitor program effectiveness nor the students in those programs." (p. 42) This is not only an indefensible but an irresponsible conclusion. Rather than recommending different assessment instruments or practices and a more rigorous application of testing mandates, the authors absolve the California educational establishment from the urgent responsibility of measuring student progress, allowing students to move on to more suitable academic placements when ready, and of making special programs accountable.

It is difficult to say whether the authors of this study, in writing the conclusions quoted above, were stating their criticism of the reclassification process in principle or simply objecting to what appear to be poorly conceived and organized testing procedures. At any rate, the report authors issue a caveat that researchers and policy makers should not use reclassification rates "as a proxy for program effectiveness when, in fact, this number may bear little relationship to the actual language skills of the students or the effectiveness of the program in teaching those skills." (p. 42) What does seem to be effective, though, is that the evaluation itself is closing the door completely on any objective comparison of student achievement in the different program models being examined, those using the native language and those emphasizing English-based instruction.

The California State Department of Education could profitably learn from the New York City school district how to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of different programs for language minority students. In October 1994 the New York City Board of Education published the results of a four-year study comparing the performance of LEP students enrolled in bilingual classrooms, where most of the instruction is provided in the native language, with LEP students enrolled in ESL programs for special help in English. The new study is the first to quantify the dramatic differences in student performance when they are given distinctively different language programs. "At all grade levels, students served in ESL-only programs exited their programs faster than those served in bilingual programs," the report said. To be more specific, "About 79 percent of students who entered ESL classes in kindergarten were able to test out within 3 years, but only 51 percent of students who entered bilingual classes in kindergarten were able to test out within three years." (*New York Times*, October 20, 1994) The dereliction in student assessment and reassignment that has been allowed to continue for twenty years in California cannot be excused for the reasons stated earlier in this essay. If New York City teachers can be held accountable for evaluating student performance and making appropriate changes in student assignments, then their California cousins could be held to these same standards.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Much of this very long and detailed report does not directly address the central question asked by the legislature: What is the most effective type of instructional program for helping LEP students to become fluent in English as the means of gaining access to an equal educational opportunity in our schools? Instead, a variety of other information is presented.

The introduction and the first three chapters of the report, which have already been discussed, deal in general with the research design for the study and, more particularly, with the two critical questions of the selection of elementary school programs and the assessment of LEP students.

The following chapters, four through ten, explore subsidiary issues that are significant in the overall plan of the study but do not speak directly to the central question. Chapter eleven presents a statistical review of LEP programs at the secondary level and Chapter twelve states the evaluation team's six major findings and conclusions.

The presentations in Chapters four through ten encompass a multitude of subjects that affect the establishment and operation of LEP instructional programs. Some of these subjects are the factors—either within or outside district control—that affect the selection and design of an LEP program, such as staff qualifications and training, program variations, the integration of LEP programs into school operations, resource allocation and implementation costs, and attendance and transiency.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A brief review of program characteristics and a description of the limited-English students enrolled at the secondary level is found in Chapter eleven. Data were gathered by telephone interviews at 27 secondary schools, by visits to five selected schools, and by consultations with local school districts, California Department of Education personnel, and a special group of advisors who are not identified in the report. A literature review is included.

Just as was the case at the elementary level, there has been spectacular growth in the enrollment of LEP students in California intermediate and high schools. In the years between 1987 and 1990, there was a 43.5% growth in the enrollment of LEP students at the secondary level, slightly higher than the 40% increase at the elementary level. Approximately one quarter of a million LEP students, almost one third of the total number of LEPs, were enrolled in grades seven through twelve.

More so even than at the elementary level, heterogeneity places a heavy burden on the establishment and operation of well functioning programs at the secondary level. Besides diversity of languages—across California there were LEPs from 96 different language groups—cultural differences and dialectal differences often exist, even within the same language or national group. Another major complicating factor in organizing classes at the secondary level for this population is the wide range of educational backgrounds (how much prior schooling they have had and whether they have any knowledge of English at all) that these students bring to their new schools.

All the secondary level programs for limited-English students that were surveyed provided English as a Second Language classes in some form and some electives, i.e., physical education, music. Beyond these, four teaching approaches were listed:

Approach A - Core academic courses taught in Sheltered English

Approach B - Use of Non-English Primary Language for teaching all academic courses (for example, the use of parallel textbooks in English and Spanish to teach math and science)

Approach C - Use of Non-English Primary Language and Sheltered English (primary language is used to teach some academic subjects, Sheltered English for others)

Approach D - Mainstream placement for all subjects

According to the authors of the evaluation, when classes were taught in the native or primary language, the language used was exclusively Spanish. No mention is made of the provision of native language courses for the speakers of 95 other languages in California's high schools.

At the secondary level and especially in high school, the question of taking and passing classes required for graduation as well as electives is of crucial importance. With LEP students, several other considerations are paramount: Should LEP students take required classes in English or in their primary language and, if in the primary language, does the school offer any or all of these classes in that language? The same question applies if students are to take these essential courses in Sheltered English: Does the school offer a sufficient number of different subjects taught by Sheltered English methods?

One important finding of this part of the study was that there were many schools that did not offer all of the classes that the students need for graduation. The evaluators divided this content coverage into three categories: Full, Partial, and Sparse. At schools with sparse coverage, for example, "one whole subject area, such as science or math, was not scheduled for LEP students, and/or entire grade levels, such as eleventh and twelfth grade classes, were not available for LEP pupils." (p. 208)

A breakdown was made of the coverage in the high schools by the four different instructional approaches. Two of the schools assigned their limited-English students to mainstream classes so that it is not possible to know if any special classes were provided for them. In the remaining eleven high schools, two had full coverage, three partial coverage, and six sparse coverage. To put it more succinctly, in only two of eleven high schools did LEP students have available to them all of the subjects that they needed for graduation.

The review of the elementary programs for limited-English students revealed that many of the schools did not reclassify their students (exit them from the bilingual program with appropriate skills to work in mainstream classrooms) for a number of the reasons previously discussed. According to reports from the secondary schools, reclassification of students at the higher grade levels is even more difficult than it is for students at the elementary level. The mastering of English writing skills appears to be the principal barrier to reclassification and, therefore, to inclusion in mainstream classes. Because of the lack of opportunities for reclassification, many students remain in LEP programs until they drop out of school.

This section of the evaluation concludes with a list of seven factors (listed below) that the authors suggest may contribute to the lack of access to core academic subjects for limited-English students:

> 1. the diverse and complex needs of LEP students
>
> 2. assessment procedures that provide too little information to accurately gauge the academic preparation level, range of literacy, and diverse academic needs of secondary school age LEPs
>
> 3. the poor implementation of Sheltered English
>
> 4. a critical shortage of teachers willing and trained to teach courses designed for LEP students
>
> 5. the absence of theoretical models of second language acquisition to serve as underpinning for effective and comprehensive programs for LEP students
>
> 6. difficulties in obtaining appropriate textbooks and materials
>
> 7. problems in the departmentalized structure and scheduling complexities of secondary schools that result in a lack of comprehensive planning for LEP students. (p. 209)

Most of these factors appear questionable to me as they do not directly address the problem. Number five deserves to be answered. In citing the "absence of theoretical models" as a factor in the denial to LEP students of access to many of the classes they need for graduation, the evaluators shine the spotlight on the correct target but are completely wrong in their assertion that there is an absence of models.

A close reading of this report reveals the following: the evaluators do not explicitly identify the theoretical base of the programs they selected for this study; the evaluation team and its advisors indicate through the selection process and the commentary in the report that they see native language teaching as the essential condition—the *sine qua non*—for second language acquisition. But a careful review of the professional literature indicates that there is no valid theory nor, for that matter, successful practice that supports the use of native language instruction in programs whose primary goal is to develop in LEP students fluency in English.

What much of recent linguistic theory does tell us is that students learn the second language (English) not only by exposure to a great amount of receptive language (listening and reading), but also by as much use of the productive or expressive language as possible (speaking and writing) in real life situations. It is this opportunity for LEP students to use English intensively with native speakers of English in order to negotiate meaning which is in short supply in current programs. Twenty years ago, before the onset of the bilingual education revolution, high school LEP students generally had this opportunity.

One study from the period immediately preceding bilingual education, conducted in four Los Angeles high schools, provides evidence that students who had been in special, English-based programs before they were completely mainstreamed, had access to all classes needed for graduation and were graduating in numbers proportionate to the overall graduation rate of each high school. (Rossier, 1968) Judging from the present study under review and other information that we have, the present LEP programs are not preparing LEP students for secondary school education and eventual high school graduation as well as local school districts did in the past. The current limited-English students are not only being denied the extensive English language teaching that used to be available to immigrant students, but also have more limited opportunities to interact linguistically with English speakers than did students in the past. This results, in turn, in delaying their ability to take mainstream classes in the core subjects.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The concluding chapter of Volume II of *Meeting the Challenge* consists of a listing and brief summary of each of the six major findings and conclusions of the study. These six findings are also found in Volume I, the Executive Summary, along with eight recommendations based on the findings and conclusions.

The first three conclusions summarize in broad fashion much of the material presented in the full report and reviewed in this paper:

> 1. California public schools face a complex challenge of educating a rapidly growing number of language minority students.
>
> 2. Schools choose different models for educating their LEP students in response to their demographic condition and resources, and then devise strategies to adapt these models to their reality.
>
> 3. Schools are developing educational and organizational innovations to address language minority issues, but they face severe resource limitations and problems in implementing their programs.

Conclusion 4, one of the more controversial conclusions, is based on data obtained by the Education Finance and Planning Group at the American Institutes for Research: The data indicated that the cost of delivering instruction in classes for LEP students was about the same as the cost for mainstream classes, and program costs beyond the classroom were highest for ESL Pull-out and Double Immersion Programs. Most funding for the cost of classes for LEP students came from district general funds; funds for supplemental services for LEP children came from a variety of sources, rather than from a single, or solid, base of support. (p. 228)

The controversy centers around conflicting views of the manner in which the schools are using funding for the LEP instructional programs and first came to light when the state's watchdog organization, The Little Hoover Commission, published its 1993 report on LEP education, *A Chance to Succeed: Providing English Learners with Supportive Education.* A dissenting view on the use of funding was best expressed by Chairman Nathan Shapell in his cover letter for the report addressed to Governor Pete Wilson and state legislative leaders. Shapell declared:

> The Department (California Department of Education), schools, academics, and other advocates all have insisted, that there is a lack of funding for English learner education. At the same time, the Department has

> adamantly denied knowing how much is spent on programs for English learners. The Commission notes that schools have almost $1 billion in state and federal funds that may be used at their discretion for at-risk, impoverished and non-English-speaking students. If all of these funds were devoted to English learners, schools would have about $1,000 extra for each child. Although these funds are meant to supplement rather than supplant base funding, a recent statewide study found that schools spend little more in English learner classrooms than they do in mainstream classes. In terms of financial accountability, therefore, the Department has failed to properly monitor the schools' use of special funding for English learners.

Although it has apparently provoked little sustained interest, Conclusion 5 points more directly at the root cause of the poor performance of the state LEP program than does any other: Most LEP students in intermediate or senior high schools may not have access to the full curriculum that would enable them to graduate.

The importance of high school graduation to our young people cannot be overemphasized. At one time, advocates of bilingual programs using the native language to teach the core high school curriculum proclaimed this as the great remedy that would enable LEP students to stay in school and graduate. Now this evaluation tells another story. These students are leaving school in large numbers because in many schools they are unable to take the core classes required for graduation.

And why are they not permitted to take these important classes? Although the report is not explicit about this, reason tells one that the delay in their English language development is at the heart of the problem. LEP students enrolled in California's elementary schools, given sufficient special English-based instruction and substantial interaction with native English-speaking teachers and students, could overcome the language barrier to an equal education long before reaching the secondary school level. But we are told that, "...many students are not reclassified from an LEP status to a fluent in English status before leaving the elementary school." (p. 230) It is not illogical to wonder if the principal reasons are those listed in the evaluation (reluctance to test students and reluctance to release students from the bilingual program) or to the basic flaws in bilingual programs *per se.*

For older LEP students arriving in U.S. schools at the secondary level, with only four to six years in which to complete their high school education, it is even more critical to provide intensive English language classes and Sheltered English classes in the core curriculum until these students can enter mainstream high school classes with the expectation that they will graduate. As much as possible, there must be opportunities for intensive interaction between LEP students and native speakers of English, in classrooms and in school activities, to motivate LEP students to acquire English fluency, the real *sine qua non* for academic achievement and participation in the school community.

In authorizing the California Department of Education to contract for an evaluation of the state's LEP programs, the Legislature indicated two particular concerns for which it wanted answers. The first of these had to do with the description of exemplary programs and the second with identifying the instructional model for educating limited-English pupils that was most effective and cost effective.

Of the two concerns, that of effectiveness had earlier been specified in the Bilingual Bicultural Act of 1976 to be the primary goal of these programs: "as effectively and efficiently as possible to develop in each child fluency in English." The evaluation team and its advisors completely evaded the request by the legislature for an objective judgment in this urgent matter, choosing instead to focus entirely on the one concern for identifying exemplary programs.

Conclusion 6 asserts: "California public schools do not have valid and ongoing assessments of the performance for students with limited proficiency in English. Therefore, the state and the public cannot hold schools accountable for LEP students achieving high levels of performance." (emphasis added) If the schools are not to be held accountable, who is to accept responsibility for the dismal performance of so many LEP students who spend year after year in segregated native language classes in which they are unable to develop the English fluency to leave this program and join their classmates in the mainstream? Or should the responsibility for such poor results be attributed to the California Department of Education which has worked uncompromisingly over the years to force primary language programs on the schools and which originally promoted the language proficiency tests whose validity is now being questioned?

Conclusion 6 poses an even more important question. If the tests used to assess LEP performance, either of English language proficiency or of achievement in subject matter, are so low in validity, does this mean that no realistic assessment is possible? The explanatory text for this conclusion seems to suggest that this is the case but, of course, this is unacceptable. Young people of limited-English proficiency have the same right as their native English-speaking schoolmates to have their linguistic and academic performance evaluated periodically by measures which clearly indicate to them and to the schools the extent of their progress toward the goals set for all students.

One possible solution to the problem of assessment, especially that of English language proficiency, would be to return to the use of teacher judgment. In several instances, the evaluation report cites schools in which this is being done successfully. Generally this type of assessment is most effective when a team of teachers rates each student on a prepared scale. The literature indicates that this kind of assessment has relatively high validity. (Baker and Rossell, 1987) Alternative assessment practices these days emphasize the collection of student work in a portfolio over a period of time to chart progress through writing samples, readings, etc., rather than relying on a single test score. But a standardized test score, such the CTBS mentioned earlier in this report, is one important element of the assessment.

## CONCLUSION

At the outset, I defined an educational evaluation as a report that should answer the question of how well the program or treatment is meeting the goal set for it. In my judgment, *Meeting the Challenge* has not even minimally met this goal. Running through the report is the theme that it is really not possible to measure program effectiveness because valid assessment instruments are not available. Accordingly, no data are presented that would give one the slightest idea of what progress LEP students are making in learning English, let alone how effective each program model is.

The evaluation is an impressive achievement in scope—five volumes containing almost 900 pages of text, lists, graphs, and charts. It provides much valuable information for those lay people, including legislators and policy makers, who might otherwise not comprehend the magnitude and complexity of the problem occasioned by the enrollment in the California schools of more than a million students with limited proficiency in English. But the report's authors regard as a "simplistic formulation" the most important question of the evaluation: Which type of instruction is more effective in helping LEP students to learn English and school subjects, primary language instruction (bilingual education) or English-based instruction, and which approach is more cost effective?

While the report presents no statistical data that would shed light on the effectiveness of current programs, it does provide several items of information that, read carefully, point to the conclusion that California's heavy reliance on native language teaching has not served LEP students well. The conclusion could be formed that the bilingual programs described as exemplary have instead resulted in delaying the learning of English, delaying the enrollment of LEP students in mainstream classes, and, in many cases, denying these students the opportunity to enroll in classes required for high school graduation. Not having access to classes available to their English-speaking classmates, LEP students are, in effect, denied an important civil right: the right to equal educational opportunity.

Was there really no way of evaluating the California LEP program in terms of the goal of developing English language fluency set down for it by the legislature? Or is this an excuse made by advocates for continuing bilingual education programs, many of them influential in the writing of this evaluation? I am firmly convinced that this excuse is used as a means of covering up the sad record of bilingual education programs promoted by the State of California.

*Meeting the Challenge of Language Diversity* will never be accomplished as long as the powerful bilingual education lobby in California refuses to permit bilingual education programs to be fairly compared with English-based programs in which LEP students are integrated with native speakers of English. Hundreds of thousands of young immigrant students deserve to have a realistic opportunity to learn English and school subjects that will allow them to progress toward high school graduation and on to higher education and to meaningful employment. *Meeting the Challenge* has shown—as much by what it has avoided saying as by what it has said—that this opportunity will continue to be withheld from them until we are able to look truthfully at the havoc that the programs of the past twenty years have caused.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Bilingual Education: *Teaching limited-English students their school subjects in the native language while they are learning English.*

Maintenance Bilingual Education (Late-Exit TBE) - *A program of bilingual teaching lasting 5-7 years to develop full literacy in two languages.*

Transitional Bilingual Education (Early-Exit TBE) - *A short term bilingual program (about 3 years) aiming for quick mastery of English and temporary use of the native language for instruction in the school subjects.*

Two-Way Bilingual Programs (Double Immersion) - *Teaching two groups of students, each fluent in one language (i.e., English speakers and Spanish speakers), to become fluent and literate in each other's language.*

Degree of English Proficiency:

Fluent-English Proficient (FEP) - *A student whose English-language ability is adequate for regular schoolwork in English.*

Non-English Proficient (NEP) - *A U.S. resident with no knowledge of English, usually a newly-arrived immigrant.*

Limited-English Proficient (LEP) - *The official term for any student in a U.S. school who does not know English sufficiently well to do regular classroom work in English.*

English Language Teaching Programs:

Communicative Approach - *The broad term applied to a variety of second language teaching methods which emphasize the functional and interactional aspects of the language to be learned, i.e., the ability to use the language rather than just learning grammatical usage.*

English as a Second Language (ESL) - *The teaching of English language intensively for both social and academic purposes.*

ESL Pull-Out - *Removing LEP students from their regular classroom for English language lessons.*

Language Immersion Programs - *A technique whereby children are taught in a second (unknown) language from the first day of school, with the goal of developing mastery of the second language for subject matter learning and literacy.*

Language Minority - *A U.S. resident whose home language is not English (but who may or may not know English well).*

Primary language, native language, home language or mother tongue - *Terms used interchangeably to mean the first language learned in infancy.*

Reclassification - *Determining when LEP students are ready to exit from special programs and work entirely in the mainstream.*

Submersion - *Assigning LEP students to mainstream classrooms where all instruction is in English and providing them no special help, as was the case for earlier generations of immigrants.*

Target Language - *The language intended to be learned.*

# Toward an Understanding of Effective Instructional Practices for Language Minority students: Findings From a Naturalistic Research Study

# TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS: FINDINGS FROM A NATURALISTIC RESEARCH STUDY

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The purpose of this article is to share the findings of an important study that empirically examines and articulates the components of effective classroom practice for limited-English-proficient second-language learners. *A Descriptive Study of Significant Features of Exemplary Special Alternative Instructional Programs* is a research report of a study by Tikunoff, Ward, van Broekhuizen, Romero, Castaneda, Lucas, and Katz (1991) conducted for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages (OBEMLA). Nine years ago, Gersten and Woodward (1985) noted that the education of language minority students is "relatively easy to write about, yet difficult to implement sensitively on a day to day basis" (p. 78). Tikunoff et al. attempted to accomplish this goal–to explain the day-to-day realities of effective instructional practice.

The report by Tikunoff et al. (1991) presents the findings of a three-year study designed to identify and describe effective practices of exemplary special alternative instructional programs for teaching limited-English proficient students from elementary and secondary schools. The report is a descriptive study of nine of these exemplary special alternative instructional programs (SAIPs). The purpose of the study was to describe features of the SAIPs that appeared to contribute to positive outcomes for students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Until recently the major topic of both debate and research in the area of bilingual education has been the language of instruction (Crawford, 1989; Moll, 1992). As Moll noted, the over-reliance, almost obsession, with the topic does a disservice to language minority students, in that little of the research and discussion has focused on the components of quality instruction and quality learning environments.

Goldenberg, another eminent researcher and scholar in the field, makes a similar point (personal communication, October 8, 1994):

> (The) language of instruction debate has so dominated discussion of how best to serve the needs of language minority children that other issues which are at least equally important, have not been adequately addressed. For example, what are optimal instructional strategies for language minority students who are at risk; ..How do we promote English language development; ..is there an optimal balance between direct teaching strategies on the one hand and "authentic" communicatively-based classroom interaction on the other?

In other words, Goldenberg, too, sees the need for research on defining effective instructional practice.

> Increasing numbers of teachers face the daunting task of simultaneously building literacy and developing written expression ability, while enhancing English language growth. These teachers often encounter many students with minimal or disrupted educational experiences in the countries from which they came, who read well in neither their native language (be it Spanish, Lao or Vietnamese) nor English (Gold, 1992). The complexity of this challenge can cause anxiety for even seasoned and accomplished teachers (Fillmore, 1982; Ramirez, 1992; Saville-Troike, 1984). Clearly, there is an urgent need for understanding critical features of effective instruction for teaching students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The past decade has seen an increasing use of programs for second language learners that stress the development of English language abilities through the use of academic instruction (Anderson & Roit, in press; Barrera, 1984; Chamot & O'Malley, 1989, 1994; Gersten & Woodward, in press; Northcut & Watson, 1986). When researchers have integrated English language instruction with content-area instruction in subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, results have been promising (Anderson & Roit, in press; Chamot & O'Malley, 1989; Goldenberg, 1992/1993). These programs go by a variety of names – sheltered English, content-based English as a second language (ESL) instruction, structured immersion, cognitive-academic language learning. In each case, for the majority of the academic day, students are taught in English. In some cases, part of the day is spent in native language instruction provided by either a teacher or a paraprofessional proficient in the students' native language. In other cases, the entire school day is in English.

There are several reasons for the increasing use of this approach for teaching the burgeoning numbers of second language learners in American schools. The first is the multitude of languages represented in many communities. It is becoming more and more common for as many as 5 to 10 different languages to be represented in one school or one classroom. The provision of native language instruction is simply not feasible in these cases. In addition, appropriate bilingual teachers are not always available, and, as others have noted, the number of bilingual teachers is not adequate to meet the increasing numbers of language minority students (de la Rosa, Maw, & Yzaguirre, 1990).

A second factor responsible for increases in approaches that stress the development of English abilities through academic instruction is a growing discontent with the model of transitional bilingual education that was commonly advocated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The naturalistic research of Ramirez (1992) found that often the "transition" from virtually all native language instruction to virtually all English instruction was rarely smooth for either students or teachers. In cases where the transition was especially abrupt, students often experienced major difficulties.

Researchers such as Barrera (1984) and Saville-Troike (1982) have consistently stressed that the key problem and issue is not the determination of the exact age or grade level at which to introduce English language academic instruction, but rather, how to merge English language acquisition with academic learning in a fashion that is both stimulating and not overly frustrating to students. As early as 1984, Barrera noted how English language reading can be an excellent medium for the development of English language competence:

> the beginning of second-language reading can be a natural . . . learner-controlled occurrence when children approach reading as a desirable, useful, and meaningful activity... as long as the learner is making sense of the written language he or she encounters (p. 170).

Parental preference is a third reason for the increased merging of content-area instruction with English language instruction, as indicated by preliminary findings from a study of families of Mexican heritage in a California suburban community (Pease-Alvarez, 1993). Pease-Alvarez surveyed 233 Mexican-descendent parents, interviewed 64 students in these families (as well as other family members), and collected standardized measures of the students' English and Spanish vocabulary.

These families ranged from those in which two parents and the child were born in Mexico (N=20) to those in which the child and one of the parents were born in this country (N=4). Although parents appreciated the use of Spanish in kindergarten and the use of Spanish to help explain school policies and procedures, they wanted their children to learn English more quickly than they were learning it in the transitional bilingual education program.

At the same time, Pease-Alvarez is careful to note that maintenance of the students' native language was invariably important to these parents, and that parents and children were enraged when the use of Spanish or Mexican culture was denigrated. Other research conducted by Pease-Alvarez and Hakuta (1992, cited in Phillips and Crowell, 1994) found that:

> Retention of Spanish among kindergarten-age children is not disrupted when English is introduced at school, in part because the children...are immersed in Spanish at home and in their community...[T]hese children are adept at figuring out when to use one language rather than the other and at making appropriate adjustments when talking with parents, with various sets of peers, or with teachers (p. 20).

More rapid English language learning through the use of literature and mathematics instruction appears to be preferred by many of parents. The challenge is accomplishing this goal in such a way that students are not unduly frustrated.

## AN EXAMINATION OF EXEMPLARY PROGRAMS

The study by Tikunoff et al. (1991) utilized methodology similar to classic research studies by Tikunoff (1985) and Fisher and Guthrie (1983) which used observational techniques to define parameters of bilingual instruction. Their research was groundbreaking in that they did not try to assess whether bilingual education "worked" but rather tried to understand why certain programs worked, and to delineate common instructional features of effective programs. Their purpose was to begin to develop a knowledge base on how to teach second language students effectively.

Tikunoff et al.'s (1991) study had a similar purpose: to further define how to teach second language students well. One of its primary goals was to develop a deeper understanding of those techniques and strategies that effective teachers use while merging content area instruction with English language instruction. In a recent, comprehensive review of bilingual research, Cziko (1992) noted that large-scale evaluations of bilingual education models will yield results of only limited interest. Even within a given model (e. g. transitional bilingual education, structured immersion), one is likely to find diverse instructional practices, especially in evaluations that encompass several school districts (Lam, 1992). Thus, rather than attempt large-scale evaluations, research is shifting instead toward attempting to describe features of effective practice for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students that cut across models or approaches. Studies such as Tikunoff et al.'s can shed some light on designing instruction to meet these students' educational needs.

Our article discusses the major findings of Tikunoff et al. (1991) in the context of contemporary research on second language acquisition and suggests implications for the field. A secondary purpose is to delineate how some of these critical instructional practices actually translate to the classroom. We believe such descriptions of practice are important for assisting classroom teachers to experiment with and adopt potentially effective practices.

We begin with an overview of Tikunoff et al.'s study, along with their key findings. Examples of observed instructional practices from their study are presented and then linked to the research base.

## OVERVIEW OF STUDY AND METHODS

During the 1970s, school districts were encouraged to develop bilingual education programs that delivered instruction in both English and the child's native language during the primary grades. For a variety of reasons, including the increasing number of languages of language minority students, along with the massive surge of immigration from countries other than Mexico, some districts began to explore other options. In 1984, when Congress reauthorized the Bilingual Education Act, two innovations were added to the legislation:

1. A new emphasis was placed on students' achievement of academic goals meeting grade-promotion and graduation standards as well as on development of English-language proficiency; and

2. A new category of programs was funded at the federal level, called "special alternative instructional programs" (SAIPs), which were to include additional approaches to instruction of language minority students. The number of SAIPs funded by the U.S. Department of Education through Title VII grew from 62 projects in 1989, to 201 projects by 1992 (Tikunoff et al., 1991).

The specific mission of the SAIP was to provide an alternative to transitional bilingual education, which was prevalent in the 1970s and early 1980s. SAIPs were to provide instruction primarily in English, although a child's native language could be used for clarification. This approach had a particular salience for schools where several minority languages were represented among the student population, or where teachers fluent in languages spoken by students were not available.

### Selection of Exemplary Program Sites

Nine SAIPs were chosen from 70 programs that were identified as exemplary by a group of 147 educators involved in various aspects of education for language minority students (Lucas & Katz, 1994). To be considered, applicants had to describe their programs and provide evidence of exceptional student performance across at least two successive years as indicated through some combination of: (a) relative gains in English-language proficiency; (b) relative gains in academic performance; (c) time required before students were mainstreamed; and (d) extent to which grade promotion requirements were met. A panel of five experts reviewed application materials from 39 programs and recommended a final slate of applicants for further review and consideration. Seventeen of these top-rated programs were visited to verify information contained in their applications. Final selection was based on information obtained from all these sources.

### Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the nine exemplary special alternative instructional program sites over a period of three years. Data collection consisted of site-specific contextual information, and observational data focusing on the instructional environment, teachers' instructional practices, and students' performance of academic tasks. For observational data, up to five classes were selected from each of the nine special alternative instructional programs, and researchers spent a minimum of five days at each site, devoting one full day of observations to each classroom. In addition, teachers were interviewed before and after each observation to gather additional information regarding particular classroom events, decisions made, and strategies used.

Brief descriptions of each of these contextual and observational data sources follows.

#### Site-Level Contextual Information

Contextual information collected on-site included data such as student demographics, organizational relationship of the special alternative instructional programs to the district, other district-specific variables, funding sources, community relations, personnel configurations, and staff development strategies. Data on these and other variables was obtained beginning with the site selection process, and was organized into Site Description Protocols which were updated following each visit. Program coordinators from each special alternative instructional program were provided opportunities to review their site description protocols, clarifying information or updating them with the most recent demographic data.

Tables 1 and 2 present key data on site characteristics and student populations. The selected exemplary special alternative instructional programs were located in six states (California, Oregon, Texas, Florida, New York, and Massachusetts). Eighty-seven percent of the classrooms from these programs served a multilingual population, and 13% of the classrooms were bilingual (all students spoke the same non-English language) (Lucas & Katz, 1994). The number of different languages spoken across the program sites ranged between 5 and 32, with a median of 19. All but one of the SAIPs served a student population primarily from low SES backgrounds. All but one were in primarily metropolitan or urban settings, with the number of language minority students served ranging from 100 to 1000. The one program located in a rural setting served fewer than 100 students.

Table 1
Exemplary Program Site Demographic Characteristics[1]

| Site | Grade levels served | Reg'l desig. | No. students in sch. dist. | % LEP students in sch. dist. | No. schools in SAIP | No. LEPs in SAIP | SES of SAIP students | No. minority langs. in SAIF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amherst, MA | 7-12 | Metro | 1,700 | 5.8 | 1 HS | 109 | Low-med. | 14 |
| Culver City, CA | K-8 | Metro | 4,500 | 24 | 4 K-5<br>1 MS<br>1 K-8 pvt. | 425 | Low | 30 |
| Davie, FL | 6-8 | Metro | <100,000 | 3 | 1 MS | 310 | Low | 31 |
| Fort Worth, TX | 7-12 | Urban | 67,500 | 13 | 5 MS<br>3 HS | 700 | Low | <5 |
| Hillsboro, OR | 8-9 | Rural | 5,477 | 3.1 | 2 JHS | 31 | Low | 6 |
| Houston, TX | 6-12 | Metro | 25,000 | 16 | 6 JHS<br>4 HS | 1020 | Low | 17 |
| New York, NY | 9-12 | Urban | <100,000 | 37 | 1 HS | 400 | Low | 32 |
| Rochester, NY | 1-6 | Urban | 27,500 | 8 | 6 El. | 447 | Low | 20 |

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

## Table 2

## Characteristics of Students Served by the Exemplary SAIPs[1]

| LEP STUDENT CHARACTERISTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | INCIDENCES OF NATIVE LANGUAGES | | | | | | | | | | | | NATURE OF IMMIGRATION | |
| | **Span** | **Viet** | **Khmer** | **Laot** | **Chin Lngs** | **Jpns** | **Kor** | **Arm** | **Filip** | **Haiti Creole** | **East Europe** | **Middle East** | **Recent Arriv** | **U.S. Res.** |
| Amherst, MA | Hi | Low | Hi | | Low | Low | | | | | | | x | |
| Culver City, CA | Hi | Low | | | Low | Low | Low | | Low | | Low | Low | x | |
| Davie, FL | Hi | Low | | | Low | | Low | | | Hi | Low | Low | x | |
| Fort Worth, TX | Hi | Low | Med | Med | | | | | | | | | x | x |
| Glendale, CA | Hi | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Med | Hi | Low | | | | x | x |
| Hillsboro, OR | Hi | Low | Low | Low | Low | | | | Low | | | | | x |
| Houston, TX | Hi | Med | | Low | Low | Low | Low | | | | | | x | |
| New York, NY | Hi | | | | Hi | | Hi | | | | Hi | | x | |
| Rochester, NY | Hi | Low | Low | Low | Low | | | | Low | | | | x | x |

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

### Description of Instructional Practice Profile

To determine what effective instructional practices were used by teachers at exemplary special alternative instructional programs, observers used the Description of Instructional Practice Profile to assess teachers' use of 33 instructional practices that prior research has shown to be characteristic of effective instruction generally (Brophy & Good, 1986), as well as practices that are advocated for use with second language learners (Chamot & O'Malley, 1989; Tikunoff, 1985) specifically for instruction of language minority students. The Description of Instructional Practice Profile observation system is a moderate inference instrument that the observers completed immediately following each observation session. Items for the Description of Instructional Practice Profile are presented as part of the results contained in Table 3.

### Instructional Environment Profile and Student Functional Proficiency Measure.

Additional information about the instructional environment (how instruction was organized and delivered), and about how students responded to inherent task and activity demands was obtained concurrently by two observers. One observer coded Instructional Environment Profile information, while the other coded Student Functional Proficiency information.

The Instructional Environment Profile observations focused on class size, class composition, lesson content, number and size of groups, criteria for assignment to groups, academic task requirements, and nature of student evaluation. The Instructional Environment Profile coding sheet was filled in at two-minute intervals. Observations were distributed as follows: 39% on English as a Second Language instruction, and 61% on content-area instruction integrated with English language development.

The Student Functional Proficiency measure describes how well language minority students perform academic tasks while acquiring English proficiency (Tikunoff, 1987). Student Functional Proficiency observations focused on three areas of student performance: engagement in academic tasks, use of skills required for successful task completion, and types of instructional tasks assigned. These data were coded based on observations of groups of four students. One student per group was observed, and the coding sheet was filled out in 30-second intervals before moving on to the next student. Each student in the group was observed five times before moving on to another group of four students.

The goal was to look at student engagement, language(s) used by students, and peer interactions.

## RESULTS

### Administrative, Programmatic and Instructional Features Characteristic of Exemplary Special Alternative Instructional Programs

In the report issued by Tikunoff et al., significant characteristics of the exemplary programs are presented in three overarching categories:

- administrative features
- programmatic features
- instructional features

Because administrative and programmatic features were fairly straightforward in their meaning and interpretation, they will be reviewed briefly. On the other hand, instructional features will be discussed more thoroughly, with an emphasis on key findings and their relation to the extant literature on bilingual education. At several times, examples from our current ongoing research are added to provide the reader with a concrete sense of the instructional strategies. Note that although each category of exemplary features is presented separately, Tikunoff et al. caution that "significant features operated in an interactive fashion and manifested concurrently at exemplary special alternative instructional programs. As a result, it would be difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, to separate them and attempt to implement them independently" (p. 36). In other words, no one instructional variable was the key to success; rather it was a thoughtful combination of administrative support and effective instructional strategies that contributed to the overall success of these programs.

#### Administrative Features

Overall, exemplary special alternative instructional programs exhibited two significant administrative-level features. The first of these was contextual features, including:

- presence of an individual who assumed an instructional leadership role (e.g., planning, coordinating, administering);
- availability of expert teachers; and
- a history of intensive staff development provided for all teachers, not just teachers responsible for language minority students.

Some exemplary sites, specifically those with a history of providing transitional bilingual education programs, drew from an available cadre of trained, experienced teachers. When the decision to establish a special alternative instructional program was made, these expert teachers were invited to participate in its development and design, and subsequently, to teach in the program. Other sites placed heavy emphasis on attracting teachers known for their content-area effectiveness. Still others solicited both effective content-area teachers and those who had worked effectively with language minority students.

The second area of exemplary administrative-level features involved a willingness to reallocate scarce administrative resources, particularly in order to accomplish the following:

- providing professional development and recruiting of effective content-area ESL teachers;
- providing education extension experiences for students beyond the regular school hours such as tutors, summer school programs;
- identifying external funds (e.g., ESEA Title VII, Chapter 1-Migrant funds) to combine with district funds for program support.

The extension of English-language development into general education classes was often a result of extensive professional development provided to faculty at exemplary special alternative instructional program sites, particularly with respect to developing instructional strategies to meet language minority students' needs. In addition, instructional leadership was directed toward coordination of school staff efforts to tailor services for language minority students. Implementation of an exemplary special alternative instructional program concomitantly increased teacher collaboration, staff participation in curriculum development, and professional development activities, especially those pertaining specifically to instructing language minority students. Involvement of mainstream teachers in these activities favorably affected instruction of language minority students in the entire school.

Based on a recognition that English-language acquisition is "a whole-life experience requiring considerable time and effort" (p. 12), the programs utilized community and extension experiences to assist language minority students by giving them opportunities to participate in a range of educational experiences. These programs also utilized community resources. For example, one program utilized community volunteers or school funding sources to offer tutoring during and after school hours; some offered special summer programs and other extracurricular activities to build English language opportunities; and one incorporated work-experience internships in the community. These extracurricular activities can be excellent supportive venues for language minority students to interact with native-English speaking peers.

Programmatic Features

Regarding significant programmatic features, Tikunoff et al. emphasize that exemplary special alternative instructional programs tended to be well-integrated into the larger school context. Availability of instruction adapted to meet the needs of language minority students permeated the schools in which special alternative instructional programs were located, whether the entire school in essence constituted a special alternative instructional program, as was the case for three of the nine sites, or whether the special alternative instructional program was more akin to a program addition within a school, as in the remaining six sites. They note that, "in the daily learning experience for a language minority student, it was not clear where an exemplary program ended, and where 'regular' school began" (p.14). The authors also noted:

> Sometimes this was by design, as was the case at one site where a whole school was organized as an exemplary special alternative instructional program. Other times it was a result of the school culture, as if by negotiated agreement a faculty offered diversified educational programs designed specifically to address students' varying needs and integrated these programs, including the exemplary special alternative instructional program, into a whole-school, coordinated effort (p.13).

Whether a district had a long history of serving English-language learners or was just recently being confronted with increasing numbers of language minority students did not seem to predict the effect that the existence of the exemplary special alternative instructional program had on the larger school environment.

## PATTERNS OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

In the remainder of this section, we describe instructional practices identified by Tikunoff et al. across exemplary programs, and explore linkages to the recent research literature.

Factor Analysis of the Description of Instructional Practices. A factor analysis was performed on the Description of Instructional Practice in an effort to identify underlying patterns of effective instruction based on the 33 individual teaching practices that constituted the Description of Instructional Practice observational system items. The advantage of the factor analytic approach is that it allows a research team to explore and better understand interrelationships among variables that point to larger constructs or concepts that characterize effective practice.

Overview of Technical Aspects of Factor Analysis. The factor analysis resulted in the extraction of nine factors with Eigen-values of 1.0 or greater, a common criteria for evaluating the utility and statistical soundness of factors. Of these nine, however, only four met an additional criteria set by the original researchers, that each factor include a minimum of three variables loading at .50 or higher. Although Factor 4 met the technical criteria set by Tikunoff et al., the item "Teacher paces instruction briskly" also met the criteria for Factor 1, where conceptually, it seemed to fit more appropriately. The remaining two items, "Teacher presents a learning environment that is both business-like and convivial" and "Teacher focuses on English language development as an integral part of the lesson," do not exhibit any particular conceptual coherence between them. Thus, we excluded Factor 4 from our report but discuss each item in isolation.

The three remaining factors contain critical information related to patterns of effective instructional practice.

- Factor 1. Teachers' facilitation of LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning
- Factor 2. Teacher-structured activities that promoted active use of language
- Factor 3. Use of native language(s) for English language development and concept development

These three key factors utilized 23 of the 33 observational items, and are listed in Table 3 below. Table 3 also lists the percentages of teachers in the exemplary programs who were observed using each practice. The label applied to each factor reflects the best judgment of the original research team as to the nature of the construct represented by the set of items forming a given factor. Item 1 in each factor is the item with the highest loading; remaining items are listed in descending order.

Table 3
Three Major Instructional Practice Factors: Percent of Variance Explained, Item Loadings, and Mean Percent Teachers (N=46) Using Each Practice[1]

| | Mean % of Teachers |
|---|---|
| **Factor 1. Facilitating LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning (31% of total variance explained)** | |
| 1. Teacher monitors students' progress toward completing instructional tasks. | 97.8 |
| 2. Teacher adjusts instruction to maximize students' accuracy rates. | 97.8 |
| 3. Teacher adjusts own use of English to make content comprehensible. | 95.6 |
| 4. Teacher provides immediate academic feedback individually to students. | 95.6 |
| 5. Teacher allows students appropriate wait time for responding to questions in English. | 97.8 |
| 6. Teacher perceives that students are capable of learning. | 97.8 |
| 7. Teacher structures opportunities for students to use English. | 97.8 |
| 8. Teacher places a clear focus on academic goals. | 95.6 |
| 9. Teacher spends most of instructional period on subject matter instruction. | 97.8 |
| 10. Teacher checks students' comprehension during instruction. | 93.4 |
| 11. Teacher paces instruction briskly. | 93.4 |
| 12. Teacher expresses high expectations for student achievement. | 93.4 |
| 13. Teacher uses materials that maximize students' accuracy rates. | 95.6 |
| 14. Teacher manages classroom well. | 93.4 |
| **Factor 2. Structuring activities that promote LEP students' active use of language (9%)** | |
| 1. Teacher assigns students to collaborate/cooperate on instructional tasks. | 47.8 |
| 2. Teacher allows students to interact with others to work on assigned tasks. | 82.6 |
| 3. Student talk dominates lesson. | 30.4 |
| 4. Teacher does not correct the ungrammatical utterances of students. | 89.2 |
| **Factor 3. Using LEP students' native languages for English language and concept development (8%)** | |
| 1. Teacher uses the students' native languages for concept development/ clarification. | 26.0 |
| 2. Teacher uses students' native language in order to develop competence in English. | 23.9 |
| 3. Teacher allows students to use their native language to respond to questions asked in English. | 54.3 |

[1] Adopted from Tikunoff et al. (1991).

**Factor 1: Teachers' facilitation of LEP students' comprehension of and participation in academic learning.**

Of the 14 DIP Profile instructional practices that clustered for this factor, 11 have been identified in the literature on general effective instruction (e.g., monitoring of student progress, adjusting instruction to increase students' success rates, provision of immediate feedback, clear focus on academic goals, reasonably high cognitive expectations, etc.).

However, four teaching practices were related specifically to modifications of instruction for second language students:

- adjusting and modifying teachers' use of English to make content more comprehensible;
- allowing for sufficient wait time to respond in English;
- checking for comprehension during instruction; and
- structuring opportunities for students to use English.

In the example below from our own research (Gersten & Jiménez, 1994), the reader will see how one exemplary teacher named Donna merged or adapted these principles of effective teaching to ensure comprehension with her language minority students. Donna taught a 3rd grade class with students who spoke at least 7 different languages (including Spanish, Vietnamese, and Cambodian). Donna, herself, spoke only English.

> Donna began by reading the story, *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema, to the class in the form of a big book. She spoke to the students in a clearer, less hurried pace than she would use in normal conversation. She also intentionally avoided synonyms and used a consistent vocabulary. Both of these strategies seemed to really increase students' levels of involvement in the lesson (as judged by eye contact maintained), and, most importantly, their comprehension.
>
> After reading two or three pages of the story, she paused to check on their understanding: Donna: What does the bow do?
>
> Student: Shoots arrow...

[Note that the question is intentionally literal, so that she could assess whether students understood a crucial vocabulary word, bow. Since the protagonist of the story is portrayed as a hero who causes rain to fall by shooting a feather from his bow into a cloud, it made sense that some children might benefit from hearing an explanation of this key word.]

A second question called for a moderate inference. It elicited a correct but truncated answer from a student:

Donna: What does he hope will happen when he shoots the arrow?

Student: The rain. (He motions rain falling.)

Donna: Right, the rain will fall down.

This student understood both the intent of the story and the question posed by his teacher but was unable (or was afraid to) fully express his thoughts in English. Donna extended and elaborated on the child's utterance. Her action had the dual effect of affirming the student's response and modeling a more complete English sentence structure for the others.

As Donna read the story she seized opportunities to teach vocabulary or to engage the children in relevant ways.

Donna: How many of you girls have earrings with holes in your ears? What are they called? Pierced, pierced means you have a hole in it. If I take a piece of paper and cut it with scissors, it's pierced.

Donna cut a little hole in a piece of paper. She asked, "What's that word? Pierce." She came back to this word later during this activity and repeated it. She also helped students relate what they knew to new situations and concepts. For example, she stressed the new word, drought, by drawing students' attention to the then current weather pattern afflicting the Southwest, because this low frequency word was crucial for understanding the plot and it was certain to be a word these students would hear and read about.

### Factor 2: Teachers structured activities that promoted active use of language (including peer interaction).

Generally, teachers utilized structural arrangements that would facilitate student interactions (e.g., place students in proximity to each other and set up activities that required them to interact linguistically to complete tasks). Observations utilizing the Instructional Environment Profile indicated that these teachers structured learning environments that promoted students' active uses of English.

Tikunoff et al. (1991) note: "Structural arrangements that place students in proximity to each other and demand that they interact linguistically to complete tasks promote language use" (p. 18). Students clearly benefit from opportunities for frequent, meaningful interactions among themselves as well as with the teacher. Along with this ample opportunity for students to respond verbally in class discussions, teachers tended to focus on the content of student oral responses, rather than grammatical correctness during content-area instruction.

One structural arrangement that has often been described in the literature as especially effective for fostering interaction among limited English proficient students is use of cooperative learning groups. Below is an example from our collaborative research (Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera, in press) of how one fourth grade teacher structures effective learning groups with a class of Latino students.

> We often observed students working together in Sonia's classroom. Sonia's views concerning collaborative efforts parallel those common in many Latino homes. Children are frequently given much responsibility for their younger siblings. Her use of cooperative learning as an instructional tool was consistent with her own cultural background and that of her students. Sonia told us what cooperative learning meant to her:
>
> I establish...cooperative groups, but I switch the students around each quarter. Before they can share with the rest of the class they need to bounce their ideas [in English] off of one another. They need someone they can trust [as they take risks in a new language].

Another way in which expert teachers of limited English proficient students continually create opportunities for students to express their own ideas in English is by providing engaging content to create a desire to communicate ideas. Many early English as a Second Language (ESL) programs were criticized for stressing grammar and usage in a decontextualized fashion (McLaughlin, 1985).

Over the past 10 years, however, ESL theorists and researchers have encouraged more natural, conversational instructional methods (Goldenberg, 1992/1993; McLaughlin, 1985). Proponents argue that ESL instruction has moved away from the rather sterile emphasis on grammar and syntax that marked earlier programs, toward an approach where learning English is integrally linked with understanding and talking about content area subjects. Implementation, however, has been erratic.

An example appears below that demonstrates how teachers can promote active use of English in an engaging context (Gersten, 1994). The following is an observation of a fourth grade class of Latino students.

> Students are sitting on the floor and the teacher begins to read a relatively brief book, an Australian story about a woman losing her memory, *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge.* The readability of the book is well below the fourth grade level, but the emotional and thematic content is complex and subtle. Children listen with rapt attention.
>
> Ms. Tapia asks students to predict what the story will be about. Even the more reticent students volunteer their predictions. All are recorded on the flip chart. Ms. Tapia provides prompts to students who seem to be floundering, such as, "With a title like this and this picture on the cover, Fernando, what do you think this story will be about?"
>
> At the conclusion of this brief story, a discussion of mood ensues. Tapia asks, "What did you think about it?" One student answers, "It was kind of sad." Tapia responds, "How do you know?"
>
> Miguel, one of the students she has earlier described as a student with learning difficulties, says "Because old people." Since the idea is on the right track, even though the English grammar is incomplete, the response is evaluated for content rather than the extent that it conformed to correct language use.
>
> Responses are never labeled right or wrong, but sometimes students are asked to explain the rationale for their answers or opinions. Jorge, for example, explains that he "liked it because it was sad and it was happy," and proceeds to provide several examples of sad and happy instances.

Tikunoff et al.'s (1991) results suggest that collaborative/cooperative learning and more structured teacher-directed learning seem to supply an ideal basis for promoting meaningful use of the second language, encouraging risk-taking and providing many, many models of proficient performance.

**Factor 3. Teachers allowed use of native language(s) for English language development and concept development.**

Teachers in exemplary programs allowed students to respond to questions or class discussions in their native languages if they understood what was being asked in English, but couldn't yet respond in English. This did not necessarily mean, however, that teachers were fluent in the students' languages. Instead, teachers turned to others (e.g. aides, other children) who understood the native language being used, and from these interactions began to develop the English behind the concept. Teachers were observed to use English during 90% of the observations, and students used native languages to some degree during 36% of the observations. Table 4 presents the actual observed data on language use by both teachers and students.

Table 4
Percent of Time Teachers and Students in Exemplary Programs
Used English and Non-English Languages[1]

| | TEACHERS | | | | STUDENTS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Use of Language** | **All Grade Levels** | **Elem** | **Middle JH** | **HS** | **All Grade Levels** | **Elem** | **Middle JH** | **HS** |
| All to most talk is in English | 95 | 92 | 95 | 98 | 75 | 86 | 85 | 66 |
| Talk is in both English and a non-English Language | 2 | 6 | 1 | <1 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 22 |
| Most talk is in a non-English language | <1 | 0 | <1 | 0 | 7 | <1 | 9 | 9 |

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

This example (Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera, in press) illustrates how a 4th grade teacher allowed students to verbalize their thoughts in Spanish before attempting to express them in English (when necessary):

> Christina considered it her responsibility to teach her students English, and she believed it necessary to provide students with opportunities to practice and use English. In other words, she did not simply insist that students speak English but instead showed students how to go about doing so. When a student answered a question in English with the Spanish word "estufa," Christina translated it to "stove," and added it to a list she was writing on the board. If a child seemed flustered in answering a complex question in English, she asked the child to answer in Spanish and then to try to say it in English.

In our observations of expert teachers, native language responses were always accepted, but students were encouraged to try to express their thoughts in English; however, they were never forced to do so.

Tikunoff et al. and, recently, Lucas and Katz (1994), report on a variety of strategies that teachers in the observed special alternative instructional programs used to facilitate and accommodate students' uses of their primary languages. One example was pairing students from the same language backgrounds during instruction and activities so that the more fluent English-speaking students could assist the less fluent students with understanding the teacher instructions and classroom assignments. Another useful strategy was to encourage students to use bilingual dictionaries, or to get help at home in their primary language from family members who were more fluent with English.

### Important Observational Items Not Included Among the Three Key Factors

The 12 items presented in Table 5 did not load on any one of the three key factors. However, several of these are worth examination because of their relevance for understanding effective teaching practices, and the extent to which they were utilized by teachers across the nine programs.

### Table 5
### Mean Percent of Teachers (N=46) Utilizing Instructional Practice Variables Not Included in the Three Major Factors[1]

| | % of Classrooms (N=45) |
|---|---|
| **Frequently Observed** | |
| 1. Teacher focuses on English language development as an integral part of the lesson. | 86.9 |
| 2. Teacher emphasizes meaning rather than the grammatical structure of students' responses. | 95.6 |
| 3. Teacher encourages high levels of student engagement in completing instructional tasks. | 95.6 |
| 4. Teacher presents information in both oral and written form. | 95.6 |
| 5. Teacher makes use of visuals or manipulatives to teach content. | 93.4 |
| 6. Teacher presents a learning environment that is both business-like and convivial. | 89.1 |
| 7. Teacher exhibits sensitivity to students' languages and cultures. | 86.9 |
| **Moderately Observed** | |
| 8. Teacher uses advanced organizers for instruction. | 80.4 |
| 9. Teacher uses students' experiences in teaching content. | 65.2 |
| **Infrequently Observed** | |
| 10. Teacher interrupts instruction to handle student discipline problems. | 32.6 |
| 11. Teacher makes use of drama, gestures, or mime during instruction. | 26.0 |
| 12. Teacher incorporates diverse cultures in teaching. | 23.9 |

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

One item shows that 87% of the teachers consciously focused on English language development as an integral part of the lesson. In other words, they dedicated a portion of each lesson to language-related objectives as opposed to content-related objectives.

Another interesting finding is that only one-fourth of the teachers used gesture and mime to convey information and ideas. As one might expect, this practice was much more prevalent in the elementary grades. Typically, manuals and books on sheltered English place great emphasis on this practice, yet it appears from these research findings that the emphasis may be misplaced.

On the other hand, the use of multiple modalities to present material was a pervasive practice. Ninety-six percent of the sample of teachers presented information both verbally and in writing. The importance of doing this for enhancing learning and language development is slowly receiving greater emphasis in the literature (Chamot & O'Malley, in press; Scanlon, Duran, Reyes, & Gallego, 1992).

Finally, these findings help elucidate a subtle but crucial issue in the education of language minority students. Although 87% of the teachers exhibited sensitivity to students' cultures and languages, only 24% were found to incorporate material from diverse cultures in their lessons. At first, this may seem surprising, even contradictory.

However, based on our research (Gersten & Woodward, 1994), we infer that many of the teachers viewed their role as assisting students with navigating the transition between the culture from which they came and that of the country in which they were currently living. They may feel it is essential not to show disrespect or lack of interest in diverse cultures, but our research shows that, for example, when Lao students are expected to master the nuances of Navajo and Sioux cultures before they have understood much about the realities of life in their current community, such as San Francisco or San Diego, they can be overwhelmed. Similarly, attempts to teach recent immigrants from Mexico and Guatemala about Eskimo culture is often disorienting and unproductive. We see an increased move toward helping students become acclimated to their new environment and acquiring a better understanding of the culture of the country to which they have immigrated, before overwhelming students with a vast array of cultural diversity (McElroy & Johnson, 1993).

Another aspect of instruction that demonstrates the importance of respect for cultural differences is the finding that teachers in this study felt that "evaluation of students' academic or non-academic performance that is public (i.e. heard by others) and negative may dissuade students from participating in classroom instruction" (p.23). These types of negative evaluations were virtually never observed in the exemplary programs. The researchers found that typically teachers would tend to support or help clarify, rather than provide negative, critical feedback. (See Gersten [1994] and McElroy-Johnson [1993] for further discussion of this critical issue.)

### Observations of Student Functional Proficiency: Student Engagement and Success

As might be expected with a group of programs that were selected based in part on their demonstration of improvements in student performance, high rates of student engagement in instructional activities (see Table 6) were observed. Student engagement and involvement were notably higher than that found in Tikunoff's (1985) earlier observational study of bilingual classrooms, where the mean was 82 percent.

Table 6
Percent Student Engagement in Exemplary SAIP Classrooms (N=46), by Grade Level[1]

| Level | Percent Engagement |
|---|---|
| Elementary | 97 |
| Middle/Junior High School | 90 |
| High School | 94 |
| All Grades | 92 |

[1] From Tikunoff et al. (1991).

The researchers also found that academic success rates were reasonably high when one considers that students were responding in a second language. The rates for responses to material in printed text were approximately 76 percent. This is a bit lower than the optimal rate of 80 to 85 percent (Fisher et al, 1980), but is nevertheless a high rate for second language learners. In addition, completion rates on academic assignments and activities was 97 percent. It appears that teachers were able to minimize frustration most of the time for many of the students.

## CONCLUSIONS

Teaching students for whom English is a second language is a complex endeavor. A serious issue is helping students with the "double demands" required of language minority students – the need to acquire a new language while mastering academic content material in English-based programs. The study by Tikunoff et al. (1991) provides the beginning of an empirical base for defining effective practice and delineates numerous specific strategies. In discussing the findings, we have attempted to elucidate key points by occasionally providing brief illustrations from our own work in the area.

Since this was a descriptive study of features common to programs deemed effective by experts rather than an experimental comparison or program evaluation, no broad statements of generalizability of these findings are possible. Nor can one distinguish firmly between the most and least useful program features. However, the study does provide much useful information for school districts interested in improving services for language minority students.

Tikunoff et al. suggest the findings are most relevant for efforts to serve diverse ethnolinguistic limited-English-proficient student populations from low incidence native language backgrounds. Other research suggests these approaches are effective even when the language minority population is homogeneous (Barrera, 1984; Gersten & Woodward, in press; Stewart, 1993). As Lucas and Katz (1994) assert, in order to truly improve the educational experiences of the increasing numbers of language minority students, we must give "...serious and informed consideration to all strategies and resources..." (p. 559).

Our focus in this paper has emphasized and highlighted the effective instructional practices identified by Tikunoff et al. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from various sources in Tikunoff et al.'s extensive study of effective practice points to two overarching findings for particular instructional practices in exemplary special alternative instructional programs for limited-English proficient students:

- Teachers integrated principles of effective instruction with English language development in subject areas.

- Aspects of the learning environment promoted active use of English.

The findings stress the importance of school districts' willingness to undergo significant restructuring at the school and even district level, in order to respond more flexibly to language minority students' increasingly higher English language proficiency levels. They also point to the need for broad staff training in how to merge English language development with content area instruction.

At the heart of these findings is a clear recognition that language minority students face unique learning challenges that demand innovative practices, but that these practices are well within the grasp of committed teachers – whether monolingual or bilingual – who are provided with relevant knowledge and support and professional development.

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# INTRODUCTION

The past year has seen a definite upsurge in the possibility for bilingual education reform across the country, growing out of newly published research studies and a grass roots trend towards program change. These developments are reflected in the three studies that are reviewed in the current volume of *READ Perspectives*, Vol. II, No. 2, the New York City Public Schools' Longitudinal Study, the American Legislative Exchange Council's report on the cost of bilingual education in the U.S., and the descriptive analysis of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Area School District's English Acquisition Program.

## THE NEW YORK CITY STUDY

When the Board of Education of the City of New York published *Educational Progress of Students in Bilingual and ESL Programs: A Longitudinal Study, 1990-1994* in October, 1994, the predictable outcry of the advocates for native language teaching programs was instantly heard, but it appears to be having almost no effect in overcoming the negative results of the report. The New York City study is of immense importance for these reasons: it examines student achievement in English-language learning, reading and math in a large, urban school district; it compares students in the same district enrolled in two basically different programs; and it charts student progress over a period of years. At a time when New York City is spending $300 million a year (1993) on bilingual programs, there is an urgent need to know whether the years of native language teaching in Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Russian, Korean, Vietnamese, French, Greek, Arabic and Bengali have resulted in better student performance than the English immersion approach.

The two groups of LEP students whose achievement was monitored in the New York study are 1) Spanish speakers and speakers of Haitian Creole who were enrolled in bilingual classrooms where they receive mostly native language instruction in reading, writing and school subjects, with brief English language lessons, and 2) students from Russian, Korean and Chinese language backgrounds who were placed in English immersion classes where all instruction is provided through a special English language curriculum.

Barbara Mujica's review provides the necessary analysis of the statistical data and its significance in straightforward prose that is accessible to the educator, policy maker, and concerned citizen. It is worth highlighting here the most important points of the New York study. "At all grade levels, students served in ESL-only programs exited their programs faster than those served in bilingual programs." (NY Study, ii) There is strong evidence in this study that the earlier a second language is introduced, the more rapidly it is learned for academic purposes--not surprising, but this flies in the face of the received wisdom of bilingual education theory. Apparently, with appropriate teaching, children can learn a new language quickly and can learn subject matter taught in that language. Reading and writing skills can be mastered and math can be learned successfully in a second language and the proof is in the performance of New York City school children, as was also the case in the El Paso report published by The READ Institute in 1992.

Critics of the study, including Luis O. Reyes of the New York City School Board, allege that Korean, Russian and Chinese background students are from middle class families and that the social class differences invalidate the study. (Krashen, 1995) It is true that socioeconomic data is not reported, but we should not make unwarranted assumptions as to how many or which of the children in the study are from poor, working or middle class families. One could reasonably surmise that most immigrant, migrant and refugee children attending the New York City Public Schools do not come from affluent families. The reality is that children from Spanish- and Haitian Creole-speaking families are routinely funneled into bilingual classrooms and children from the other language groups are mostly assigned to English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms. I firmly believe that Haitian and Latino children would succeed in mastering English language skills better and faster and, therefore, join their English-speaking peers in mainstream classes much sooner than is now the case if they were given the same opportunity given to Russian, Korean, and Chinese students.

## THE ALEC STUDY ON THE COST OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

The American Legislative Exchange Council's *Report Card on American Education 1994* includes a special supplement on the cost of bilingual education, which is reviewed by Marsha Youngblood. The ALEC study makes a bold attempt to unravel the mysteries of exactly how many students are served by special programs that aim to remove the language barrier to an equal education, what kinds of programs they are enrolled in, which states these students are concentrated in, and how much is actually being spent in this special effort.

Youngblood correctly points out the flaws in the study and warns that the cost figures may be an over- or under-estimation of what is actually spent, but she reaches these main conclusions: both federal and state agencies give preference to native language teaching programs over ESL programs in funding decisions by a wide margin even though "there is no conclusive research that demonstrates the educational superiority of bilingual education over ESL" (ALEC, 3); and there is a widespread lack of accountability in bilingual education across the country. The ALEC report shows that the heavy investment in mainly bilingual programs for the past 27 years has not produced exact data on how much these programs cost or how successful they are in realizing their goals in student achievement.

Though cost alone should not be the determining factor in deciding on special language programs for LEP students, analyses of cost benefits inevitably do affect education policy decisions. In both the El Paso and New York City longitudinal studies, students in the structured immersion, English-language programs met program goals in 2-4 years and were able to work in regular classrooms without special help, while students in the traditional bilingual classrooms needed 6-7 years to reach the same level of skills for mainstreaming. Although neither study set out to study costs, it is clear that the expense of giving large numbers of students extra services for 2-4 additional years would be formidable. The ALEC study, whatever its shortcomings, does provide a foundation of useful data and makes a few promising recommendations on data collection and accountability for the education establishment.

## THE BETHLEHEM, PENNSYLVANIA, SCHOOL DISTRICT'S ENGLISH ACQUISITION PROGRAM

The Bethlehem study is published here in a densely detailed format in response to the numerous requests that The READ Institute has received from school administrators, teachers, and school board members for practical information on how to develop and evaluate a program for limited-English students that does not rely on native language teaching. Typically, the request has come from educators who have been responsible for special programs that, after intensive efforts and expenditures for a dozen or so years, are not producing good results for LEP students. Administrators want to know just how to go about transforming a failing program where LEP students are languishing, segregated by language, for half a dozen or more years into a second language acquisition program that will produce rapid, effective English language skills for academic purposes; how to monitor student achievement to demonstrate whether the new program is effective or not; what staff development is needed for specialists and for regular classroom teachers; which teaching strategies/texts work best with different age groups and ability levels; and, not incidentally, what is legally acceptable under federal, state and civil rights law.

The Bethlehem study provides a detailed blueprint for fundamental change, for the wholesale transformation from a Transitional Bilingual Program in which almost all instruction is in Spanish for several years to an English Acquisition Program that rests on the elements of structured immersion. How the change was initiated by the school superintendent, promoted in the Latino community and among school staff, and developed by a well-focused committee of school professionals, is ably reported by the authors of this study, Judy Simons-Turner, Mark Connelly and Ann Goldberg. The new program began in September 1993 and the Bethlehem Board of School Directors stated the goal of this program is "to have all limited-English-proficient students become fluent in English in the shortest amount of time so that they may experience maximum success in school." (Bethlehem, 1993) Turner, Connelly and Goldberg report on the major changes effected in these first two years in school restructuring, integration of LEP students with their English-speaking peers in neighborhood schools, curriculum modifications, teacher training, and revisions in assessment procedures. They gathered data on perceptions of the English Acquisition Program and attitudes towards its implementation in two surveys conducted at the end of the first year among school teachers and administrators and among the parents of the limited-English students. They also describe data from classroom observations and make recommendations for improvements to be introduced over the next several years.

The Bethlehem study does not yet cite statistical data on student achievement, aside from a progress report on the promotion of students from one English-language skill level to another. The authors delineate the evaluations being conducted, noting that the school district is committed to collecting data for a number of years to come. In order for Bethlehem to substantiate any claims of success, it should be able to show, over time, that the English Acquisition Program results in students' exiting more rapidly to the mainstream, that referrals to Special Education or other remedial programs does not increase for LEP students, that school dropout rates for these students decrease and high school graduation rates increase, and that these results are superior to what was reported for the bilingual program that was in effect for the ten years prior to 1993. This information is of crucial importance to other school districts across the country and *READ Perspectives* expects to provide an annual update on student achievement in the Bethlehem English Acquisition Program.

The READ Institute, with the current publication, continues to pursue its twin goals of providing reviews of relevant research in a useful form and giving educators practical guidelines for program development and evaluation.

Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Ed.D.
Editor, *READ Perspectives*

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# Findings of the New York City Longitudinal Study: Hard Evidence on Bilingual and ESL Programs

Barbara Mujica, Ph.D.

One of the first long-range, objective studies of the progress of Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students in a large metropolitan school district confirms what experienced language teachers--and everyone else with a modicum of common sense--has known all along: You cannot make students proficient in English by teaching them in another language. *Educational Progress of Students in Bilingual and ESL Programs: A Longitudinal Study, 1990-1994*, published in October, 1994 by the New York City Board of Education, contains disconcerting evidence that programs for LEP students, on which New York State spends over a billion dollars annually, have failed. (ALEC 7) According to the report, most students in bilingual education classes do not become sufficiently fluent in English after three years to be mainstreamed--that is, integrated into regular classrooms in which English is the language of instruction.

## Scope And Nature of The Study

The New York City study evaluates the progress of LEP students who entered the system during the 1990-1991 school year, focusing not only on the time required to exit LEP programs, but also on the reading and mathematics achievement of students who move on to monolingual English classes. Students in New York City are eligible for bilingual or ESL programs if they score below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB), an English proficiency test developed and normed on the New York City LEP school population, and if they speak a foreign language at home. They exit these programs when they score above the 40th percentile on the LAB test, which is administered during the spring semester of each school year. The evaluation process is itself suspect, since on a bell curve, a certain number of students will always fall below the 40th percentile. Even if all the students tested were fluent in English, a percentage would always place at the lower end of the spectrum. Thus, the test is designed to keep LEP classes full.

New York State law stipulates that LEP students may remain in special programs no longer than three years. However, those who fail to achieve an acceptable score on the LAB test within that period of time may receive an extension from the Commissioner of Education in Albany. The longitudinal study shows that only a third of LEP students actually are mainstreamed after three years, and even after four years of special instruction, nearly half of those LEP students who entered the system in first grade did not know enough English to join regular classes.

New York City employs two methods to teach LEP students. Bilingual education uses the student's native language for content instruction. This means that students spend most of the day in classes taught in their native language. The rationale behind teaching children primarily in their native language is to allow them to master course work so they will not fall behind grade level and will graduate with their age group. ESL (English as a Second Language) teaches students using controlled English and a special curriculum aimed at the rapid acquisition of English. In ESL classes students are not simply immersed in an English-language classroom and subjected to a barrage of unfamiliar sounds; instead, they are taught by a specially trained instructor who uses "controlled" or limited English to introduce new aspects of the language systematically. The native language, if used at all, is limited to helping the child adjust socially and to communicating with the parents. The Longitudinal Study demonstrates that students who receive ESL instruction fare far better than those who are taught primarily in their native language.

Surprisingly, New York City spends vastly more on bilingual education than on ESL, a phenomenon that reflects national tendencies. In the United States we are currently spending over $12 billion annually to educate LEP students, most of which is spent on native-language based bilingual programs. We spend less than half on ESL programs than we do on bilingual instruction. (ALEC 8)

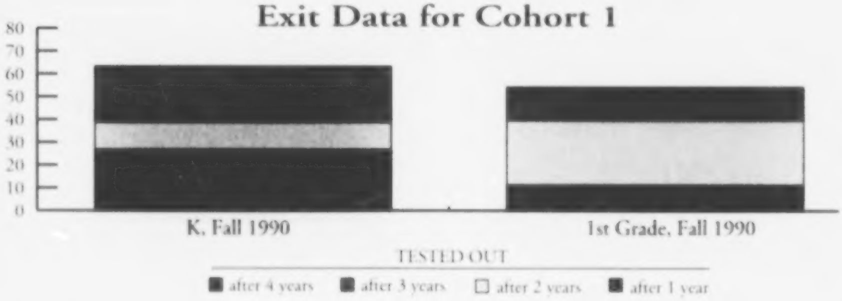
The New York City study tracks two cohorts, the first consisting of students who entered kindergarten and grade 1 in fall, 1990, and the second consisting of students entering grades 2, 3, 6, and 9 in 1991. These grade levels were chosen to comprise Cohort 2 because they "represent critical points in children's development." (Longitudinal Study [LS] 1) The study reports on the progress of these groups through June, 1994; thus, it includes four years of data on Cohort 1 and three years of data on Cohort 2.

## FINDINGS

The research shows that LEP students who begin special instruction early on in their school careers qualify for mainstreaming faster than those who enter in the later grades. Nevertheless, the statistics even for children who began special programs in kindergarten are cause for alarm. Of the 11,320 LEP students who entered kindergarten in fall, 1990, 36.7 percent--over a third--were still "entitled," i.e., needed to be in a special program, after *four* years. After a fairly successful initial success rate--26.8 percent tested out after one year--the percentages decline. The second group comprising Cohort 1 shows an even lower rate of success. Of the 2,053 children who entered first grade in 1990, 45.6 percent were still entitled after *four* years. Exit rates are shown in the chart below.

Of the students who entered LEP programs in kindergarten
- 26.8% exited after 1 year
- 12% exited after 2 years
- 20.6% exited after 3 years
- 3.9% exited after 4 years

Of the students who entered LEP programs in first grade
- 11.3% exited after 1 year
- 28.3% exited after 2 years
- 8.6% exited after 3 years
- 6.1% exited after 4 years



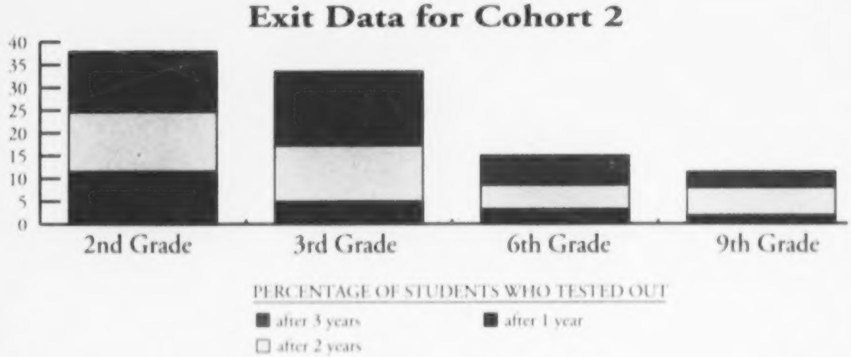
Research on the second cohort provides information only on students' progress over a three-year, rather than a four-year period. Nevertheless, statistics provided by the Longitudinal Study lead to the same gloomy conclusions as those on Cohort 1. Exit data for the four grades evaluated is shown in the chart below.

Of those who entered in the second grade
- 11.5% exited after 1 year
- 13.1% exited after 2 years
- 13.3% exited after 3 years

Of those who entered in the third grade
- 4.9% exited after 1 year
- 12.3% exited after 2 years
- 16.3% exited after 3 years

Of those who entered in the sixth grade
- 3.2% exited after 1 year
- 5.3% exited after 2 years
- 6.5% exited after 3 years

Of those who entered in the ninth grade
- 1.8% exited after 1 year
- 6.1% exited after 2 years
- 3.5% exited after 3 years



The data reveal that after three years, 62.1 percent of the 841 students who began bilingual or ESL programs in the second grade still had not mastered English well enough to be mainstreamed. Of the 797 children who began special instruction in the third grade, 66.5 percent were still ineligible for mainstreaming after three years. For the groups of 754 and 1,366 students who entered the system in the sixth and ninth grades respectively, the success rate was dismal. In the case of the sixth-graders, 85 percent had failed to qualify for mainstreaming after three years of special classes. In the case of the ninth-graders, a whopping 88.6 percent were not proficient in English after three years. As shown by the rising percentage of students who failed to exit the program after three years, the later students enter the system, the less their chance of ever becoming eligible to join regular classes. In fact, students who begin special instruction in high school (ninth grade) have less than a 12 percent chance of achieving English proficiency. Furthermore, the longer they stay in bilingual or ESL programs, the less chance they have of becoming functional in English, although, as shown later on in this article, the success rate for students who receive ESL instruction is significantly higher than for those who receive bilingual instruction.

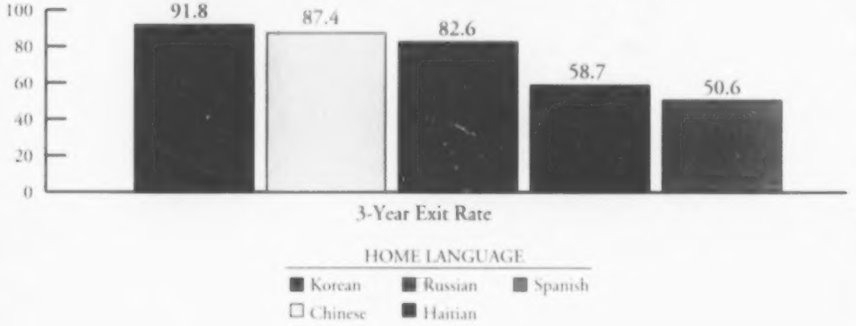
These statistics suggest that in order for bilingual or ESL instruction to succeed, it must begin early. However, factors besides the classroom experience may come into play here. It is possible that very young children are more receptive than their older schoolmates to other forces. They are perhaps more willing to form friendships with English-speaking students outside their ethnic group and less self-conscious about trying new sounds or making errors in the target language. Adolescents are not only notoriously self-conscious, but are also often reluctant to separate from their clique. This would make it difficult for older non-English-speaking children to forge relationships with their English-speaking peers--especially when they are isolated from the English-speaking student body by special LEP classes. New York has established special schools for immigrant children, exacerbating the problem of isolation from the general student population.

## ESL AND BILINGUAL SUCCESS RATES COMPARED

Although the Longitudinal Study reveals the general failure of special instruction for LEP students to produce youngsters who are proficient in English, it also provides information regarding certain areas of relative success. Two pertinent pieces of data emerge from the study. The first is that some ethnic groups do indeed achieve high exit rates after three years. The other is that students in ESL-only programs fare far better than those in bilingual programs. (The authors specify ESL-only because bilingual programs also include an English-instruction component; students are taught all subjects other than English as a second language in their native tongues.) In fact, even when the statistics are adjusted to take into account students' level of English proficiency upon entering the program, the study shows that children in ESL-only programs qualify for mainstreaming faster than those in bilingual programs. (LS 38-43)

The statistics show significant disparity between the exit rates of LEP students whose home language is Spanish or Haitian Creole and those of other groups. Students from Korean-, Chinese- and Russian-speaking backgrounds were able to learn enough English to exit bilingual and ESL programs faster than those whose languages were Spanish or Haitian Creole. The three-year exit rates for the groups studied are shown in the chart below.

**Exit Rate by Home Language**



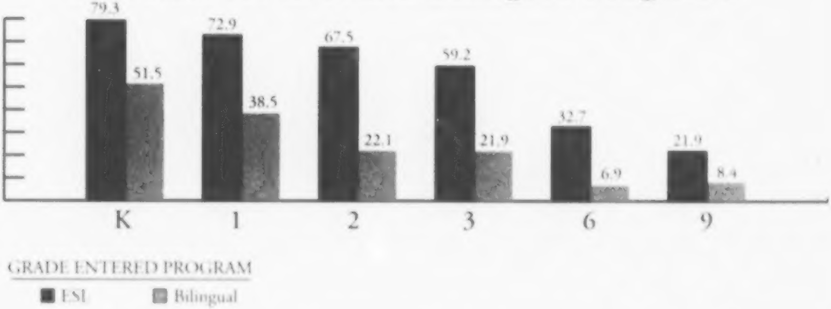
According to the report, "The three-year exit rates were lower for students entering at high grade levels, but the differences among language groups were still observed." (LS ix) Although the report does not provide percentages specifying which students were in what kinds of programs, it does include the information that Spanish- and Haitian Creole-speaking students were usually placed in bilingual programs, while other LEP children were most often placed in ESL-only programs. The data on ethnic groups supports the conclusion derived from other areas of the Longitudinal Study that ESL is a far more effective method for teaching LEP children than bilingual education.

In a phone conversation with Lillian Hernández, Executive Director of Bilingual and ESL Programs for the New York City Public Schools, I asked what percentage of the LEP teachers spoke Korean, Russian, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Spanish or other languages. She told me that this information was not available and would be hard to glean, since many teachers were qualified to teach in more than one language. However, the fact that Korean, Russian, and Chinese children are usually placed in ESL-only classes, while Haitian Creole- and Spanish-speaking children are usually placed in bilingual classes, suggests that far more teachers are available to teach the latter two groups, a factor whose political significance will be discussed below.

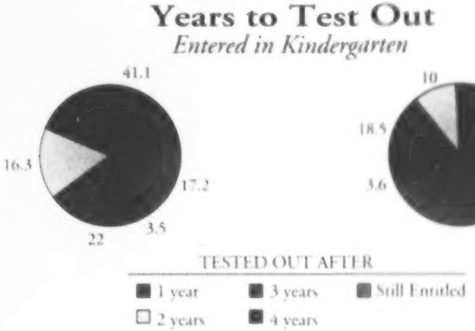
The Longitudinal Report also considers the level of proficiency in English of LEP students at the point at which they enter ESL and bilingual programs and concludes that the "proportion of students testing out of the programs increased with the students' entering level of English competence" (as measured by percentile rank on the LAB). (LS 24) This held true for all grade levels studied and for students in both ESL-only and bilingual programs. The data show that no matter what the student's level of proficiency upon entering the system, "exit rates were higher for ESL-only than for bilingual programs." (LS 24)

In addition, the study compares the three-year exit rates for students in ESL-only and bilingual programs. The authors conclude that, "Regardless of the grade entered, students enrolled in ESL-only classes tested out of the programs faster than students in bilingual programs." (LS 15) The exit rates for ESL-only and bilingual programs are compared in the chart below.

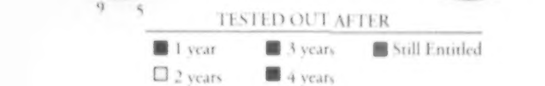
**Exit Rate for ESL and Bilingual Programs**



Children in ESL programs not only tested out in larger percentages, they tested out more quickly. The charts below show how long it took each group to test out of ESL-only and bilingual programs. The pie to the left shows the exit rates for children in ESL-only programs. The pie to the right shows the exit rates for children in bilingual programs. Clearly, those in ESL-only programs not only succeeded at a higher rate than their peers in bilingual programs, but achieved English proficiency far more quickly.



As the age of entry into LEP programs increases, the discrepancy between the groups receiving ESL-only and bilingual instruction becomes more dramatic. The chart below shows the exit rates for ESL-only and bilingual programs for children who entered in the first grade. The pie on the left contains data on ESL programs; the pie on the right, on bilingual programs.

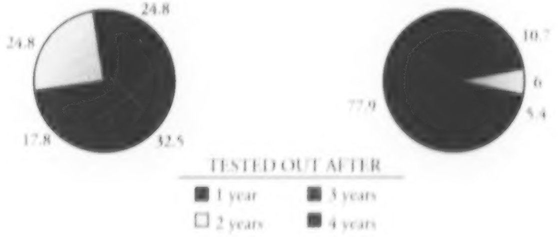


For both those who entered as kindergartners and those who entered in the first grade, the rate of success for children in ESL-only programs was more than double that of children in bilingual education programs.

Of the children who entered LEP classes in the second grade as part of the 1991 cohort, nearly a quarter--24.8 percent--of those in ESL-only programs were able to exit after one year, while just 5.4 percent of those in bilingual classes achieved the same result. Additional data is included in the charts below. The pie on the left shows the exit rates for children in ESL-only classes, while the pie on the right shows the exit rates for those in bilingual classes.

### Years to Test Out

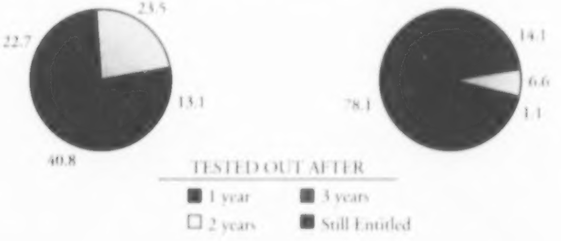
*Entered in Second Grade*



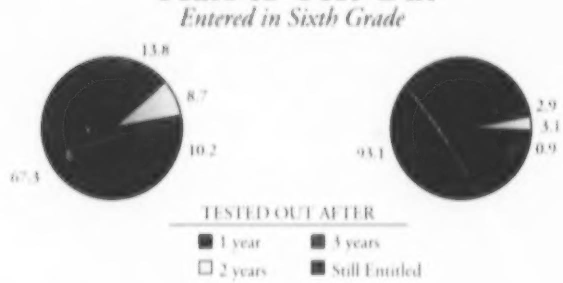
The exit data for the remaining groups in the study show a striking decline in success rates of both ESL-only and bilingual education students. The older children are when they enter LEP programs, the smaller their chances of learning English well enough to test out. However, according to the statistics, students who enter at any grade level are more likely to succeed if they receive ESL-only rather than bilingual instruction. Exit data for the third-grade 1991 is shown in the chart below. The pie on the left refers to ESL-only programs; the one on the right, to bilingual programs.

### Years to Test Out

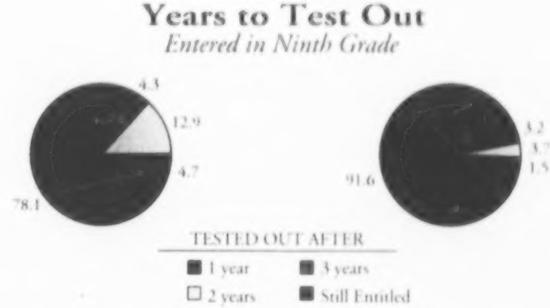
*Entered in Third Grade*



In the sixth-grade 1991 cohort, just 10.2 percent of the ESL-only students tested out of the program after one year, while *less than one in a hundred*--0.9 percent--of the bilingual education students were qualified to make the transition to mainstream classes. Exit data appears in the charts below. The pie on the left refers to ESL-only programs; the one on the right, to bilingual programs.



The statistics for the ninth grade 1991 cohort are disturbing for both ESL-only and bilingual education students, but even here, ESL-only students fared better than their peers in bilingual education classes. Exit rates for this group are given below. The pie on the left refers to ESL-only programs; the one on the left, to bilingual education programs.



These statistics suggest that LEP programs have met with only limited success and that in the upper grades, bilingual education in particular has been a documented failure. Yet, it is not reasonable to conclude that older children are incapable of learning a second language. Rosalie Pedalino Porter shows that high school students participating in the Newton, Massachusetts LEP program, did indeed become proficient in English. The Newton plan provides one to three hours per day of ESL instruction combined with three to five hours per day in regular classes taught in English, which include art, music, physical education, mathematics, science and social studies. The number of hours in regular classes increases in tandem with the student's abilities, and the LEP teachers work closely with the mainstream teachers to monitor each student's progress. (*Forked Tongue*,126-141) In Fairfax, Virginia, where bilingual programs were replaced with ESL-only programs in 1969, 80% of the LEP students routinely achieve English proficiency. Although bilingual education advocates argue that this is because Fairfax students are from upper or middle-class backgrounds, two-thirds of LEP students are actually economically disadvantaged. (*Forked Tongue*, 146-147) In my own experience, many English-speaking American students who begin foreign language study in ninth grade become fluent and literate in Spanish or French after three or four years, even though they receive only 50 minutes of instruction a day, provided they are motivated and their teachers conduct class primarily in the target language. It is simply wrong to assume that students beginning the study of a second language in the ninth grade are incapable of attaining fluency.

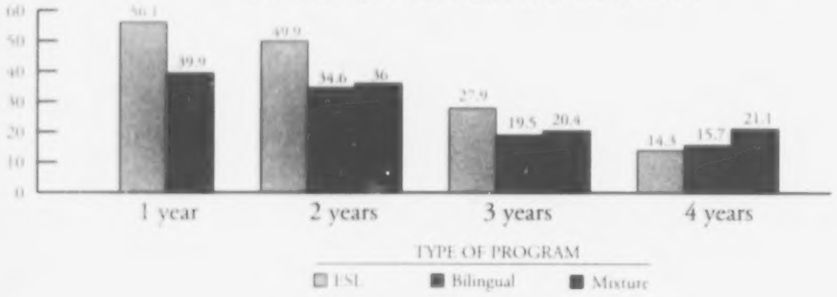
New York City is throwing away billions of tax dollars on programs based on methods that simply do not produce the desired result, while assigning a subordinate role to methods shown to be more efficient. Of those students who did not score well enough on the LAB test to enter regular mainstream classes after four years of special LEP instruction, most were in bilingual classes. Yet, in spite of the data demonstrating the ineffectiveness of bilingual education, most school systems give preference to this method over ESL. New York mandates that all LEP students receive some type of special instruction. On the elementary level, if 15 or more students in the same grade, or in two contiguous grades, have the same home language, then the school must provide a program of native-language instruction for those children. On the secondary level, if 20 or more students in the same grade have the same home language, then the school must provide a bilingual program. Students enter ESL programs only if their school does not provide a bilingual program.

Parents do have the right to opt for ESL even if bilingual education is available, or they may opt out of LEP programs entirely. However, they are often discouraged from doing so. According to Diane Ravitch, senior research scholar at New York University and co-founder of the Educational Excellence Network, parents wishing to remove their children from the assigned course of instruction must go through a long and harrowing appeal process which may well daunt recent immigrants with an imperfect knowledge of the system and a poor command of English. A parent who wishes to buck the system "must go to the school and obtain the permission of the principal," explains Ravitch; "then she must meet with the bilingual coordinator for the school, who is obliged to tell the parent about the special value of the bilingual program, the training of its staff, and the benefits to her child. Only a parent who is able to pass through this battery of interviews and various forms intended to discourage her may then move her child out of the bilingual program." (6) Nevertheless, increasing numbers of parents and teachers advocate this route. (Pyle, A1)

## READING AND MATH SCORES OF FORMER LEP STUDENTS

Follow-up statistics presented in the New York City report on students who have tested out of special programs show that the earlier students left LEP classes, the greater their chance of success later on in their school careers. According to the Longitudinal Report, "Students in both cohorts who tested out of LEP-entitlement after one or two years of service generally performed above average on the citywide tests of reading (in English) and mathematics that were given in spring, 1994. However, there were large differences in performance between those who had been served in ESL-only versus bilingual programs, and between those who exited after one or two years versus those who exited after three or more years." (ix) The students who had been enrolled in ESL-only programs received better scores than those in bilingual programs in both reading and math. The earlier students tested out of the program, the better their scores.

In New York City, students' reading ability is evaluated by the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) test, which measures ability to read and understand English prose. The fiftieth percentile marks grade level. On a bell curve, about 50 percent of the students taking the test should score around grade level, with 25 percent scoring above and 25 percent scoring below. That is, one would expect 75 percent to be performing at or above grade level. Statistics on reading scores for children in the 1990 cohort testing out of LEP programs after one, two, three and four years are given below.

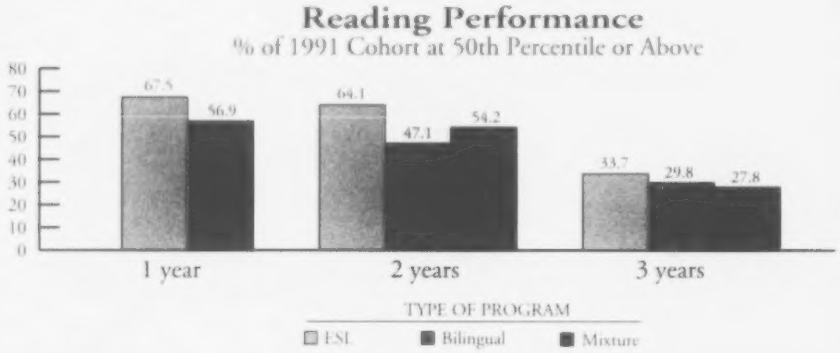


Reading Performance

% of 1990 Cohort at 50th Percentile or Above

With respect to students who entered kindergarten or grade 1 in 1990 and tested out of special LEP programs within one or two years, about 50 percent of those who had been in ESL classes and 38 percent of those who had been in bilingual classes were reading at or above grade level in spring, 1994. Of those who tested out of entitlement programs after three years or longer, about 28 percent of those who had been in ESL programs and 20 percent of those who had been in bilingual programs were reading at or above grade level.

Students in the 1991 cohort achieved similar results, as shown in the chart below.


**Reading Performance**
% of 1991 Cohort at 50th Percentile or Above

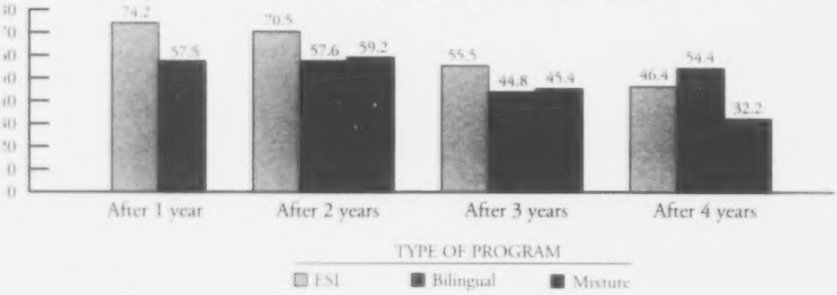
In the 1990 cohort, a total of 3147 students who had been in ESL-only classes and 3,323 students who had been in bilingual classes were tested. Of those who had been in ESL-only classes, 49 percent eventually read at grade level, while only 32 percent of those who had been in bilingual classes performed that well. Of the total 552 students who had been in mixed classes, 26 percent read at grade level after two, three, or four years of LEP instruction. In the 1991 cohort, a total of 334 students who had been in ESL-only classes, 217 who had been in bilingual classes, and 42 who had been in mixed classes were tested; 57 percent of the first group, 43 percent of the second, and 42 percent of the third eventually performed at grade level in reading. Although children who had been in ESL-only classes out-performed their peers in other LEP programs, many students--no matter what program they were in--were still not performing at grade level. Even so, the percentage of those who had been in ESL-only classes was higher than for the general New York City school population, 47.5 percent of which reads at grade level or above.[1] The percentage of those students reading at grade level who had been in bilingual or mixed programs was below the citywide average for both cohorts.

The math scores of former LEP students who tested out of special programs were higher than their reading scores. This is not surprising, since mathematical concepts and skills are not entirely language based. Even children who have not mastered English can grasp the notion "1/2" or learn to multiply 17 X 18, although, as we shall see below, the language of instruction does seem to affect math education somewhat, especially for children who have been in LEP programs for more than two years.

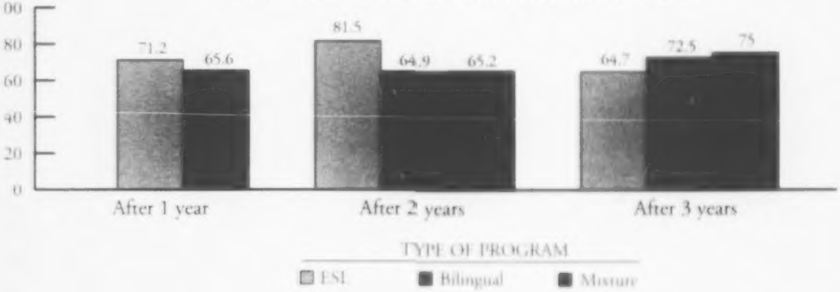
The mathematical achievement of students is measured by the CAT/5 test. The fiftieth percentile marks grade level. Nationally, 50 percent of the children to take the test perform at the fiftieth percentile, with 25 percent above and 25 percent below. Of the children in the 1990 cohort who tested out of LEP programs after one year, 74.2 percent of those who had been in ESL-only classes and 57.5 percent of those who had been in bilingual classes were performing at grade level or above in mathematics. This means that students who had tested out of LEP programs after one year and had been in ESL-programs were performing as well as the general native English-speaking school population. Of the students who exited after two years, 70.5 percent of those who had been in ESL-only, 57.6 percent of those who had been in bilingual classes, and 59.2 percent of those who had been in mixed classes scored at or above the 50th percentile in math. Once again, the first group performed very near the national norm. After three years, students who had received ESL-only instruction continued to out-perform those in other types of classes, with 55.5 percent of those enrolled in ESL-only, 44.8 percent of those in bilingual, and 45.4 percent of those in mixed classes achieving grade level. The percentage of students who scored at or above grade level in mathematics was lower for those who exited LEP-programs after four years than for their peers who exited earlier. Of those who had been in ESL-only classes, only 46.4 percent were performing at grade level in mathematics, considerably lower than the 55.5 percent of their peers who exited after three years. Of those who had been in bilingual classes, the percentage was larger, 54.4 percent, but still lower than for the ESL-only group that exited after three years. Of those who had been in mixed classes, only 32.2 percent were performing at grade level. This information is shown graphically in the chart below.

**Math Performance**

% of 1990 Cohort at 50th Percentile or Above



For the 1991 cohort, the statistics are even more encouraging, as shown in the following chart.



**Math Performance**

% of 1991 Cohort at 50th Percentile or Above

The figures shown in the preceding chart are especially impressive in view of the fact that in New York only 53.3 percent of the general school population is at or above grade level in mathematics.[2] Thus, a larger percentage of former LEP students than others achieve or exceed grade level.

As in the reading test, students who exited LEP programs in one or two years did better than those who took longer to test out of the program. In general, students who had been in ESL-only programs achieved higher scores than those in bilingual classes, although this trend was reversed for the students in both the 1990 and 1991 cohorts who took longest to test out of the program. The Longitudinal Study states that, "No explanation is known for this reversal." (LS 25) However, the reason is not difficult to deduce.

ESL-only children who tested out of the program after three years may have less aptitude for English, less competent teachers, or less exposure to the language outside the classroom than those who test out earlier. It is also possible that they are enrolled in less intensive programs. For whatever reason, these students have had greater difficulty assimilating English than their peers who exited ESL-only classes after one or two years. If these students who have had trouble with English are taught mathematical concepts in English, they will obviously have certain difficulty mastering the material. It is logical that students who had been kept in native-language classes for a long period of time and were taught mathematical concepts in their native language, or in mixed classes in which the material taught in one language was reinforced in the other, would learn these concepts better than those who were taught in a language they did not fully understand. In other words, it stands to reason that those students who had so much difficulty mastering English that it took them three or four years to exit the program and who, while in the program, received content instruction primarily in their native language, would perform better in content areas than those who had comparable difficulty learning English but had content instruction in English.

Two factors prevent these statistics from being used as an argument for native-language teaching: 1) The number of students who comprise the group that deviates from the norm is very small. Only 314 students tested out of LEP programs after four years and were tested for reading in the 1990 cohort, while 3200 tested out after one year, 1808 tested out after two years and 1700 tested out after three years. Of those students in the 1990 cohort who took the CAT/5 in math, 3128 had tested out of LEP after one year, 1758 after two years, and 1552 after three years. The groups that tested out after four years consisted of only 217 students, a fraction of the other groups. The authors of the Longitudinal Report themselves seem to dismiss this reversal, noting that the group was "small in relation to the 1990 cohort as a whole." (LS 25) 2) The statistics given here are for students who do eventually test out of native-language bilingual education programs. However, the majority of children who enter bilingual education programs in which they are taught primarily in their native language *never test out.* The relative few who do achieve English proficiency after three or four years, perform better than those who have been in ESL-only programs, but a smaller percentage of bilingually trained than ESL-trained students ever achieve proficiency at all. As shown later on in this article, the vast majority of those students in native-language bilingual education classes who took the CAT/5 in their native language is performing far below the norm.

The authors of the New York City report, ever wary of the reaction their findings will elicit from the bilingual lobby, caution that, "When interpreting this finding, one should be aware that students who exit ESL/bilingual classes earlier have spent more time in monolingual-English classes than those who exit later." (ix) Later, in their discussion of the achievement score data in reading and math, they attribute the higher percentage of students performing at grade level among those who exit LEP programs earlier to the fact that they "have spent more time in monolingual-English classes" than those who took longer to test out of the programs. (LS 25) Exactly. The sooner students are mainstreamed, the more thoroughly they will master the language and the better they will do on tests designed for the general school population. Yet, the New York City Schools recently moved to keep children in LEP programs for a longer period of time than ever. In 1989 the criterion for entitlement to ESL/bilingual services was changed. Previously, a LAB score at or below the 20th percentile was the cutoff point. In 1989 it was raised to a LAB score at or below the 40th percentile, greatly enlarging the pool of children eligible for LEP services. This move, favored by the bilingual lobby, resulted in jobs for administrators, teachers, assistants, and clerical workers employed by the system. However, the data from the Longitudinal Report suggests that it has not benefited the children.

## REACTIONS TO THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY

The New York City study poked a hole in the multi-million-dollar bilingual education balloon. Schools Chancellor Ramón C. Cortines was forced to admit that bilingual education was not working. He was quoted in the New York Times as saying: "This report appears to show that our students in bilingual programs are not showing rapid enough progress in English language proficiency." Mr. Cortines promised to form a committee of parents and educators to determine which programs best service New York City's 150,000 students whose first language is not English. However, on June 15, 1995, Mr. Cortines, plagued by quarrels with Mayor Rudolph Giuliani over control of the schools, budgetary constraints, school safety, and other issues, resigned effective October 15, 1995.

Diane Ravitch points out that, "Because New York City has a large and vocal bilingual constituency (many of them employed by the school system), the report was a hot potato." (5) Aware that they were stepping on some powerful toes, the authors and Chancellor Ramón Cortines made every effort to deflect criticism by citing discrepant evidence and stressing the "preliminary nature" of the report. They refer the reader to a study by J. D. Ramírez and another by V. P. Collier and W. P. Thomas that advocate keeping children in bilingual programs as long as possible. Ramírez compares the development of reading and mathematical skills for Spanish-speaking children who have participated in English-immersion, early-exit immersion, and late-exit immersion programs. He finds that LEP students who stay in bilingual programs for the maximum number of years acquired reading and mathematical skills as fast or faster than those in the other types of programs studied. (Christine Rossell has found methodological flaws in the Ramírez Report; she contends that Ramírez's data is not actually based on what occurred in classrooms, that there was as much variation within types of programs as between types of programs, and that some of the early- and late-immersion programs were really much more like English immersion.) (Wilson 39) Collier and Thomas, who studied the progress of LEP students who received their schooling only in English with those who received bilingual education, show that the first group received lower scores on standardized tests than the second.

No sooner was the Longitudinal Study published than dissident voices were raised. This is not surprising in view of the fact that, as Rosalie Pedalino Porter demonstrates amply in her book *Forked Tongue*, bilingual education is a highly charged political issue. Since most Spanish-speaking children are in bilingual education classes, and bilingual education provides employment for thousands of Hispanic teachers and activists, the bilingual lobby--mostly Hispanic--had every reason to feel threatened. Luis O. Reyes, Manhattan representative to the New York City School Board, criticized the comparisons between the achievements of Korean and Russian children and those of Hispanic and Haitian children, arguing that the former come from a higher socio-economic background than the latter. (Leone 1) Mr. Reyes did not take into account the fact that in the past other immigrant groups such as Italians, Eastern European Jews, Japanese and Vietnamese usually came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, yet often excelled in school. Ofelia García, a professor of bilingual education, challenged the report before the Board of Education of the City of New York on November 16, 1994. She argued that the Longitudinal Study provided no control of variables: "The study doesn't isolate the many different independent variables of the groups studied, especially socio-educational variables and ethnic identification variables, focusing instead only on educational treatment." (2) She also argued that the report presented "only descriptive data without subjecting it to any kind of statistical analysis," and that causality was not properly analyzed. (2)

In order to assess reactions to the report of ESL/bilingual educators and administrators, I telephoned several specialists and borough coordinators for LEP programs. None of the people I called was willing to converse with me; they would not give me a statement or allow me to use their names. Surprisingly, most told me that they had not actually seen the report. I called Lillian Hernández, Executive Director of Bilingual and ESL Programs in the New York City Public Schools to ask her reaction to the report. I was especially interested in knowing why the report had not been more widely distributed among people whose job it is to educate LEP students. She told me that the Longitudinal Report was completely inaccurate, that it "did an injustice to the program" and "warped the entire picture," and referred me to a follow-up report issued by Chancellor Cortines two weeks after the Longitudinal Report. I tried to ask Ms. Hernández several questions--for example, what changes, if any, had been made in the education of LEP-entitled students as a result of the statistics provided in the study, what the educational backgrounds were of LEP students entering New York City schools in the upper grades and what the linguistic make-up was of the pool of ESL/bilingual teachers. However, she cut me short to go to a meeting, suggesting that I call back another day. When I called back, she declined to come to the phone after the secretary had given her my name.

Although I left a message, she did not return my call. The reluctance of bilingual educators to discuss the Longitudinal Study is disturbing because it seems to indicate an unwillingness to confront the data.

Ms. Hernández did send me a copy of the report issued by Mr. Cortines in November, 1994. According to the Chancellor, this document contains positive findings on the rate of progress of LEP students. "Not only does it show that LEP students are mastering English, improving their reading ability in the native language and improving their skills in content area such as math, it also shows that in the majority of cases, their learning progress exceeds that of other students being tested." (1, underlining Cortines')

Mr. Cortines attempts to lessen the impact of the data on low exit rates from LEP programs by stating that, "As important a goal as transition to mainstream classes is for bilingual and ... ESL programs, that is not the only goal." (1) Apparently, Mr. Cortines thinks that even though large numbers of children never learn enough English to test out of LEP programs, the school system should congratulate itself because some do acquire native-language reading and math skills. He does not take into consideration that those reading skills in Spanish will not allow children to participate in the greater society--that is, to enter college and to obtain high-paying jobs--unless they can also communicate and achieve a high level of literacy in English.[3] Although Mr. Cortines may stress that learning English is not the *only* goal of bilingual/LEP programs, it must certainly be the *main* goal if it is to provide LEP students with the basic tool they need to function in American society. *Lau vs. Nichols*, the 1974 Supreme Court decision that upheld the right of LEP students to supplementary language services states that, "Any ability grouping or tracking system employed by the school system to deal with the special language skill needs of national origin minority children must not operate as an education deadend or permanent track." (Wilson 47) Certainly, any system that does not achieve mainstreaming must be considered "deadend." Mr. Cortines does concede that "not all the news is good." (1)However, he does not mention the unacceptably high percentage of LEP students who fail to test out of special programs or the fact that students who have been enrolled in ESL classes not only mainstream at a higher rate than those who have been in bilingual classes but also achieve better scores in math and reading when they do. Furthermore, he does not mention some damning data on math achievement scores of LEP students included in *Citywide Test Results*, discussed below.

While the Longitudinal Study focuses on exit rates and the progress of children who have tested out of the program, the paper-issued in November focuses on the achievement of LEP students *during* the period in which they are in bilingual or ESL classes. The document consists primarily of comparisons between the 1993 and 1995 scores of LEP students on reading and math tests. The authors conclude that although the scores of LEP students were below average on the English-language test, their scores in all areas showed improvement. In reading achievement LEP students performed well below the national norm, but this is to be expected because these children took the test in their second language. Students in all grades showed a better rate of improvement than the national norm on the DRP test, and in five of the seven grades tested their average one-year gains exceeded the norms for English-speaking students. LEP students also made greater gains on the LAB tests than the norms.

On the citywide mathematics tests administered in English, LEP students showed more improvement than the norms in grades 6, 7, and 8; in other grades, they improved at the same rate as the norms group. LEP students who took the math test in Spanish or Chinese improved at a faster rate than the norms group, but this is of minimum significance, since this group consisted only of 265 students, as compared with 17,435 students who did not take the test in translation. The authors of the report caution that the data from the tests given in Chinese and Spanish "must be interpreted cautiously because the groups involved are small." (*Educational Achievement*) More data is not available because CAT/5 tests were administered for the first time in 1993 only in pilot form and only in Spanish.

However, more telling figures are available in another document, the *Citywide Test Results in Mathematics, Spring, 1995*, made public in June, 1995. This document deals more fully with the scores of the 26,248 students who took the CAT/5 in Chinese, Spanish, or Haitian Creole and contradicts the rosy picture painted by the report issued in November, 1994. Although no comparison figures are available for Haitian students since the test was offered in Haitian Creole in 1995 for the first time, the data that does appear is quite troubling. According to this document, 16.6 percent of the children who took the CAT/5 in translation were performing at or above grade level in mathematics. The authors point out that this figure represents an improvement of 1.1 percent over the scores of the previous year, yet it is far below the 53.3 percent for students who took the English version.

*Educational Achievement of LEP-Entitled Students while Enrolled in Bilingual and ESL Programs* does indeed point to some successes and these are certainly relevant. The data shows that some LEP children are indeed learning reading and mathematics in school. Yet, this response to the Longitudinal Study fails to address some fundamental problems. Although LEP students are *improving* faster than the norms, as a group, they continue to *perform* below the norms. Of course, to a certain extent, this is to be expected, since many of these students come from impoverished, war-torn areas where they received little or no education. However, the data provided by the New York City Board of Education shows that claims that native-language instruction enables children to catch up, work at grade level, and keep from falling behind are patent exaggerations. The failure of the authors of the response to the Longitudinal Study to mention that only 16.6 percent of the LEP children who took the CAT/5 in their native languages are performing at grade level throws into question the validity of their report. Furthermore, this document avoids completely the primary issue: many LEP students--in fact, the vast majority of those in the upper grades--never learn enough English to integrate into regular classes, which means that even if they have learned some math and reading skills in their native language, their opportunities are severely limited. The *Educational Achievement* report also eschews the question of which methods are most effective for teaching LEP students; since mainstreaming is not the focus, the higher success rate of ESL students as compared to that of bilingual education students is simply not mentioned. The precipitousness with which this second report was issued--just two weeks on the heels of the Longitudinal Study--is an indication of how uncomfortable the data from the first study made the bilingual lobby.

## DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES

Although a great deal of research exists on teaching LEP students, much of it has been done by individuals with a vested interest in a particular method. A study of LEP programs in California, conducted by a pro-bilingual committee, failed to reach any conclusion about the effectiveness of those programs because, according to the evaluators, no valid assessment instruments are available. According to Robert E. Rossier, who analyzed the report, the "deck appears to have been stacked from the beginning" in favor of native-language instruction, but even this biased group was not able to produce data to support bilingual education. (30) While the report contains a huge amount of information, it offers no statistical data on the efficiency of current programs to mainstream students or teach them subject content. This is odd in view of the fact that research exists on language testing and ways in which it can contribute to second language acquisition. (Shohamy, 133-144) In spite of the reticence of the evaluating team, Rossier found that the report does include information that "points to the conclusion that California's heavy reliance on native language teaching has not served LEP students well." Bilingual programs "described as exemplary" have not resulted in mainstreaming and improved graduation rates, but instead "have resulted in delaying the learning of English, delaying the enrollment of LEP students in mainstream classes, and, in many cases, denying these students the opportunity to enroll in classes required for graduation." (48)

But if experts in bilingual education are unwilling to recognize the system's weaknesses, many teachers and parents are not. California has recently seen a growing movement to educate LEP students in English, and at least four districts in the southern part of the state have petitioned to drop native-language instruction. Last year, the state cited dozens of districts for failure to provide adequate English-language instruction to its LEP students, thereby impeding their integration into regular classes. Furthermore, some disgruntled parents are opting to take their children out of bilingual programs in favor of ESL programs. (Pyle, A1)

In New York, in spite of the obstacles facing parents wishing to remove their children from bilingual education classes, families are taking a stand against the system. In September 1995, the Bushwick Parents Organization in Brooklyn, New York, filed suit against the State Commissioner of Education, charging that tens of thousands of immigrant children in New York City has been kept in bilingual classes for excessive amounts of time. Representing 150 mostly Hispanic families, the organization claimed that their children languished in bilingual programs for as long as six years. The parties to the suit complained that once students entered the system, they were trapped in a "prison" where they learned little English and not much of anything else, despite parents' protests. (*New York Times*, September 21, 1995)

The situation in California is complicated by the efforts of bureaucrats in the California Department of Education (CDE) to dictate bilingual education in the schools. In 1976 the state legislature adopted the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act, which stipulated that school districts should be given "great flexibility" in designing programs for LEP students. However, the CDE eliminated that flexibility, imposing rigid requirements that school boards provide native-language instruction; those that failed to comply risked losing state funding. The CDE was assisted by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), which set increasingly rigorous qualifications for teachers and required them to show proficiency in the language of their students.

The imposition of bilingual education led to many abuses, the most common of which are: 1) holding students in native-language classes for much longer than the maximum three years recommended; 2) providing students with minimal English instruction--sometimes just 20 minutes a day; 3) placing students in native-language classes against their will and against the will of their parents; 4) placing students who speak one language in "native-language" classes taught in a tongue other than their own--for example, placing Vietnamese-speaking students in classes taught in Spanish. Even after the Chacon-Moscone Act expired, bilingual activists and CDE bureaucrats maneuvered to make certain school systems maintain bilingual education programs as though the law were still in effect.

In March, 1995, when the State Board of Education was considering new regulations giving local school systems greater flexibility in designing and administering bilingual programs, bilingual activists and CDE bureaucrats once more managed to hinder these efforts. Furthermore, the CTC announced that teachers would have to obtain one of two new credentials--the Cross-cultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) license or the bilingual CLAD license--or else lose their jobs, even if they had had many years of experience teaching LEP students successfully. Large numbers of California teachers, disgusted by the abuses and tired of the demands of the bilingual lobby, have taken a stand against the bureaucrats. The California Teachers Association (CTA) is battling against the new regulations, which have bolstered support for an outright ban on bilingual education and a requirement that LEP students be taught in English exclusively. (*CTA Action*, 14) Furthermore, the CTA has adopted an official position on bilingual education which states: "All programs shall enable students to attain verbal and academic competency in English." (*CTA Action*, 15)

Steven F. Wilson, special assistant to Governor William Weld of Massachusetts and director of strategic planning, also favors a more flexible approach to teaching LEP students. In his study of bilingual education in Boston, Wilson reached conclusions similar to Rossier's. In his opinion, many of the criticisms that have been made of bilingual education in other regions of the country are applicable to the Boston program, which services 16.6 percent of all Boston school children and 40.5 percent of Hispanic children. These include "overenrollment, the late exit to regular classes by TBE (transitional bilingual education) students, insufficient English instruction, inadequate preparation to participate in the mainstream economy, questionable claims of extra-academic benefits, and the charge that bilingual education is an employment system."(46) Since studies show widespread dissatisfaction with the current system, Wilson advocates allowing parents greater choice in determining how their children will be educated.

In spite of the contention of many bilingual educators that children need to be taught in their native languages in order not to fall behind in school, throughout the country teachers are coming up with strategies for teaching school subjects without resorting to native-language instruction. In El Paso, Texas, bilingual immersion, an innovative approach toward educating LEP students, has produced promising results. In this system, children are taught in English from the first day of first grade. The material is structured so that the children understand what they are taught and respond in English from the beginning. *Bilingual Immersion: A Longitudinal Evaluation of the El Paso Program* compares bilingual immersion with transitional bilingual education and finds that children in bilingual immersion programs actually do better in math and reading than those in bilingual programs in the lower grades, and do about the same beyond sixth grade. However, bilingual immersion has definite advantages, for it "leads to more rapid, successful, and increased integration of Latino students into the mainstream, with no detrimental effects in any area of achievement." (Gersten, iii) The difficult transition from native-language to English instruction described by Ramírez is avoided. Furthermore, bilingual immersion allows school districts more flexibility by making it feasible for one teacher to accommodate students of different language backgrounds. Since the native language component would last only from 30 to 90 minutes a day, one bilingual teacher could service three to five classrooms and school districts could therefore make more effective use of their bilingual teachers.

## CONCLUSIONS

As the New York City Longitudinal Report makes amply clear, bilingual education is shortchanging our LEP students. Since native-language instruction is the most widely used method of teaching LEP students nationwide, it is essential that school boards study the findings of the Longitudinal Study very carefully. Failure to integrate non-English-speaking students will have serious repercussions well into the next century. According to the Census Bureau, only 52 percent of Hispanics finish high school, compared with 82 percent of white non-Hispanics and 75 percent of African-Americans. Even among Hispanics born in this country, the graduation rate is only 60 percent. Since Hispanics are expected to constitute more than a fifth of the population by the year 2010, the United States risks a dramatic drop in its overall educational level unless the trend is reversed. The Education Department claims that lack of proficiency in English is an important factor in the dropout rate. More than 83 percent of Hispanic students who don't speak English fail to graduate. The most tragic result of our failure to integrate language-minority children is the creation of a sub-class whose members do not possess the basic skill they need to take advantage of the educational and career opportunities this country offers. Not only do thousands of immigrant children fail to learn sufficient English in school, but we are producing a generation of native-born Americans whose language skills are so lacking that they may never be able to join the mainstream. The General Accounting Office reports that only 43 percent of the limited-English students in our schools were born abroad, and the GAO counts in this percentage children born in the U.S. to immigrants who arrived in the last ten years. In an analysis of the GAO statistics, Rosalie Porter asks, "Are 57 percent of the limited-English students native-born and, if so, why are such large numbers not fluent in the common national language?" (Review, 12) The GAO has offered no satisfactory explanation of the figure. Porter conjectures that some of those included among the 57 percent may be Puerto Ricans, but Puerto Ricans cannot account for the entire amount. Some of them may be children who actually speak English, but do not read and write it well enough to function in regular classes. "If this is the case," concludes Porter, "then there may be a large number of students who are wrongly enrolled in programs where they are being taught in another language when what they urgently need is remedial help in reading and writing in English." (Review, 12)

Rather than pouring billions of dollars into programs that research shows do not work, we must explore alternatives to bilingual education. In addition to bilingual immersion, many new programs that combine English with content-area instruction have been developed. Rosalie Porter describes several of them in *Forked Tongue.* (121-158) Some teachers have objected to traditional direct methods, arguing that they rely excessively on rote memorization, mechanical drills and artificial production without understanding. However, approaches such as "community language learning" and " imaging" avoid these pitfalls.[4] Other methods such as the "natural approach," based on the hypothesis that language acquisition occurs when the learner begins to understand messages first in then outside the classroom, are designed specifically to eliminate the mechanical aspects of earlier audio-lingual approaches.[5] During the last two decades the emphasis in both foreign language and ESL instruction has been on communication and proficiency, and today most language professionals reject the structuralist methods of the sixties.[6] Some of the newest methods in second-language learning stress actual content or subject matter, discarding completely rote memorization and mechanical drills. For example, the "strategies" approach--in which students are taught strategies for reading for meaning--is aimed at increasing the reader's ability to cull information from a text, even though he or she may not understand all the vocabulary or structures.

In school districts in which students come from a large number of diverse countries, native-language instruction may simply be impossible. Furthermore, by isolating children into language ghettos in school, we discourage contact with English-speaking youngsters who could facilitate newcomers' socialization into American society and contribute to their mastery of English. Bilingual education advocates have advanced the notion that bilingual education is the only viable means of teaching LEP students and that other methods should be employed only when there are insufficient resources to teach language-minority students in their native tongues. However, as the Longitudinal Report shows, bilingual education is *not* the most effective tool for teaching LEP students. As we move into the next century, it is essential that we investigate other options.

The new thrust toward some form of limited English immersion in California has been called a grass roots movement. But such a movement cannot succeed unless the public is informed about the nature and consequences of the present system. Most people simply do not know what bilingual education is; many think it is the same as ESL. In a quick informal survey, I asked thirty individuals--fifteen Hispanics and fifteen non-Hispanics--to define bilingual education. Although some of them said they were in favor of it, *not one of them* realized that bilingual education involved extensive content-area instruction in the student's native language. Unless the public is made aware of studies such as the New York City Report and demands changes, we risk creating a permanent linguistically disadvantaged sub-class in this country.

## ENDNOTES

1. According to Ramón Cortines, who was Chancellor of New York City schools until June 15, 1995, this average score on the DRP reading represents a 1.9 percentage point improvement on the previous year. (Press Release, 1) New York City's scores are above average for urban school systems, which is 39 percent at or above grade level for reading and 45 percent at or above grade level for math.

2. This score represents a 3.4 percentage point improvement over the previous year. This is the highest score since the 1990-1991 school year. (Press Release, 1) Of the 388,316 students in general education and special programs in grades 3-8 who took the California Achievement Test in math, 26,248 took it in Spanish, Chinese, or Haitian Creole. (Press Release, 3)

3. Some multiculturalists deplore this insistence on English literacy. Sandra Lee McKay argues that "literacy" should not necessarily mean English literacy, and equates the efforts of the "power elite" to insure that immigrants become literate in English with cultural imperialism and racism. She laments the fortunes of the archetypal Cierra family, forced to learn English to gain permanent residency and to acquire an education, even though "all of them may have preferred to manage their lives in their mother tongue." (25) She rants because, "in the case of the Cierra family, the role of language in their lives will be planned in many ways by the elite of the dominant English-speaking community." (28) At the same time, she assures the reader that the Cierras want to get ahead economically. She fails to take into

consideration, however, that without literacy in English, the Cierras will have very limited access to the jobs that make economic advancement possible.

4. See Earl W. Stevick. *Memory, Meaning and Method*, pp. 125-133. This method, which is not new at all, stresses the importance of a warm, comfortable environment or "community" for language learning. See also Earl W. Stevick. *Images and Options in the Language Classroom*. This book develops a set of concepts about verbal and nonverbal imagery, then focuses on options open to teachers who are aware of how imagery functions in the minds of their students.

5. See Stephen D. Krashen and Tracy D. Terrell. *The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom*. With its emphasis on comprehension and communication rather than correctness, this system is applicable both to foreign language study and to second language study (ie. ESL), p. 179.

6. H. H. Stern discusses the evolution of language teaching from structuralism and various direct methods to proficiency in *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*.

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# THE COST OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.: A REVIEW OF THE ALEC REPORT

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## INTRODUCTION

The American Legislative Council (ALEC) released a report in September 1994 on costs and other issues of bilingual education in the United States as a special supplement to its publication, *The Report Card on American Education 1994*. The authors explain that the small amount of information available on the costs of educating "Limited-English Proficient" (LEP) students, as they are called, motivated this study. These are students whose English is so limited that they cannot do regular classroom work in English.

This national survey comes at a time when the funds per LEP student are diminishing because the total numbers of these students are growing--and will continue to grow for several decades. For example, between 1986 and 1994, the numbers of language minority children in our schools increased from 1.5 million to 3.5 million. (Constable, 8; GAO, 34-35) Yet federal funding has decreased in the past ten years by about 40 percent per LEP student.(GAO,2-3) Today five percent of the children in public schools are born outside the U.S., and in 20 years, the number of school children from first and second-generation immigrant families will almost double. (Fix and Zimmerman, 20)

Of course, not all schools in the United States face these growing numbers. Eighty-four percent of language-minority children live in ten states. However, the problem is more widespread than one might think. The ALEC report cites 1990 statistics showing that the challenge to successfully educate these children is shared throughout many counties in the United States: about one-sixth of 3,140 counties in 47 states have 500 or more limited-English speakers. (ALEC, 4)How much money is needed to educate these growing numbers of American school children who don't speak English? How much do effective programs cost? How much are we currently spending to educate these children? The effort to tie costs to outcomes is an important one, and the ALEC report is one of several to appear recently that urge greater accountability from bilingual education programs.

## DEFINITIONS

What constitutes bilingual education? Who is eligible for receiving bilingual education and what kinds of instruction qualify? Stating that there is little agreement throughout states and local school districts about how to answer these questions, this report begins by explaining how federal legislation and the courts have defined bilingual education. The Bilingual Education Act, Title VII, passed by Congress in 1968, states that money can be spent on programs for those who are judged to have "sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in English-only classrooms." (ALEC, 2) While it is called the Bilingual Education Act, it does not specify any particular method of instruction for limited-English speakers. It simply encourages "new and imaginative" approaches to the problem.

Nor did the Supreme Court mandate one instructional approach for those entitled to help under the Bilingual Education Act. In the case, Lau vs. Nichols (1974), involving the rights of Chinese students to special help in school, the Court ruled that the San Francisco Schools had to provide equal educational opportunity to non-English-speaking Chinese students in form of special language services. Several approaches were acceptable. The Court said, "Teaching English to students of Chinese ancestry is one choice. Giving instruction to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others." (ALEC, 2)

The ALEC report identifies three basic types of bilingual education programs. Two are designated as "bilingual" because these programs spend a significant amount of time teaching children academic subjects as well as reading and writing in their native language and a short amount of time teaching them English (Transitional Bilingual and Developmental Bilingual). The third, designated "English as a Second Language or ESL," provides special instruction in English to language minority students with a special curriculum for learning their academic subjects in English. (ALEC,3)

## FINDINGS

### 1. Federal funding

In 1992, the federal government spent almost $120 million on bilingual education. Most of this money was awarded in grants to state departments of education, universities, resource centers, and local schools through the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA). The breakdown on federal monies to bilingual and ESL programs for 1991-92 is as follows, based on figures from the ALEC study:

Figure 1:
Federal Funding for Bilingual Education, 1991-92

| | BILINGUAL | PERCENT | ESL | PERCENT | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | $79,326,000 | 79% | $21,706,000 | 21% | $101,032,000 |
| 1992 | $84,031,000 | 70% | $32,156,000 | 30% | $116,187,000 |

As the ALEC study points out, 70 to 80 percent of federal funds went to programs teaching all subjects in the native language as opposed to ESL programs--even though no mandate exists for one instructional program over another. (ALEC,3)

### 2. Numbers of LEP students in state programs

One of the main values of this national survey is drawing together reliable state figures on how many students are enrolled in different types of programs for LEP students. Statistics on federal funding for public education are relatively easy to gather through the National Center for Educational Statistics, the main source of national information on educational spending; however, state figures are much harder to come by.

Using comprehensive figures drawn mostly from the Special Issues Analysis Center, the ALEC study devotes two pages of its report to a state-by-state listing of numbers of students in different programs and the approximate amount spent on these programs in 1991-92. Where numbers from states were not available, the authors of the survey supplied partial figures from the federal government whenever possible. Four states--Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Arkansas--did not apply for grants to collect data on their LEP students, so no statistics are included for them. The total number of students identified as LEP enrolled in U.S. public schools, 1991-92, is reported to be 2,326,546. (ALEC, 3) The following table summarizes the ALEC figures on enrollment of students in special language programs.

Figure 2:
Total LEP Students in Special Programs in Schools, 1991-92

| Bilingual | ESL | Unknown | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1,126,000 | 412,844 | 353,608 | 1,892,845 |
| 60% | 22% | 18% | |

There are several striking things about this data. First of all, 2.3 million LEP students attended public schools in 1991-92, but only 1.9 million (Figure 2) were actually enrolled in special language programs. Almost 20 percent of LEP students were not enrolled in any special language program--450,000 language-minority students who, one surmises, were left to "sink or swim." Secondly, 18 percent of LEP students were enrolled in special programs categorized as "Unknown." This category was created by subtracting the total number of students enrolled in bilingual and ESL programs from the total number of students in special programs. This suggests that states were unable to describe some of their special language programs.

Thirdly, 60 percent of the students in special programs were in bilingual ones while only 22 percent were in ESL programs. The use of a bilingual methodology, which focuses on native language instruction, is almost three times that of the incidence of programs using an ESL methodology, which concentrates on the rapid learning of English.

### 3. State funding for language minority programs

The Executive Summary of this survey begins by acknowledging the great difficulty of gathering accurate data on the costs of bilingual education at the state and local level. State and local funds account for some 93 percent of public elementary and secondary funding, and good data exists on this spending for all states. However, no one source tells how much of this money was used for special programs for students who do not speak English. The federal government does not require that states report what they spend on limited-English proficient students, so the National Center for Educational Statistics has no specific information on state and local school district spending for this purpose. (ALEC,1)

States vary considerably in what they identify as costs and in how they report these costs. Although states and local school districts are supposed to estimate the total money spent on bilingual education, few guidelines exist on which expenditures should be included. In a paper presented to the American Educational Research Association in 1990, Cynthia Prince and John Hubert outlined some of the flaws in previous attempts at cost analysis. For example, New York and Florida had classified bilingual education as a form of compensatory education and recommended equal funding for the various remedial programs. In another instance, New Mexico had added an additional 50 percent to their per pupil expenditure for each LEP student and used that as their estimate for the cost of bilingual education. It didn't matter which type of program the student was enrolled in, or even if the student was enrolled in no program at all. (Prince and Hubert, 4)

In another case, Connecticut reported a doubling of expenses for bilingual education between 1984 and 1988. At the same time there was less than an 8 percent increase in numbers of language minority students in bilingual education programs. As Prince and Hubert state:

> It is highly unlikely that bilingual education expenditures in Connecticut actually increased by such a large amount in four years, but it is impossible to determine how much of the difference is due to real increases in expenditures and how much is a result of changes in local reporting practices from year to year. (p.6)

To arrive at their cost figures, the authors of the ALEC study used a formula other states have applied: they multiplied numbers of students in each type of program times the average expenditure per pupil in each state. These per pupil expenditures came from a National Education Association report on the states for 1991-92. Using this formula, the ALEC study estimated that a total of $9.9 billion was spent on programs for 1.9 million LEP students at the state and local level in 1991-92. The breakdown by program type is as follows:

Figure 3:
Approximate Costs of State LEP Programs, 1991-92

| Bilingual | ESL | Unknown | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| $5.5 billion | $1.9 billion | $2.4 billion | $9.9billion |
| 55.9% | 19.6% | 24.5% | |

Projecting these same rates of LEP enrollment, the report estimated such special language programs would spend $12 billion in fiscal year 1993-94.(ALEC,8)

As the ALEC report recognizes, these are not actual "costs" of programs for LEP students, but the figures give some idea of how the funds were distributed between the different types of programs. While more money was spent on "Unknown" programs than on ESL programs, there were actually more students in ESL programs (see Figure 2)--a function of differences in per pupil expenditures in different states.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT COSTS

- First of all, as the ALEC report points out, the funding decisions at both the federal and state levels show a marked preference for native language intensive programs: 70 to 80 percent at the federal level and 60 percent at the state level. Yet as the authors observe, "...there is no conclusive research that demonstrates the educational superiority of bilingual education over ESL." (ALEC,3) Nor does federal law or the courts show this preference. However, sixteen states have mandated at one time or other that bilingual programs are the only ones that can be provided in certain situations. These states include some of the ones with the largest language minority populations--California, Texas, Illinois, New Mexico, and Massachusetts.

- These cost figures are not really "costs" at all, which the ALEC report readily admits. However, this report does say that these cost figures probably underestimate what's being spent on LEP students. The authors of this report assert that per pupil expenditures are greater for LEP students than for English-proficient students. But as several researchers have pointed out, what is most important is not the total cost of educating LEP students but what the Connecticut State Department of Education termed "differential costs"--the costs unique to bilingual education programs or those costs above and beyond what is required for basic instructional services to educate any child. From this point of view, the ALEC figures are most certainly an overestimate of what was actually spent on all bilingual programs.

For example, Cynthia Prince and John Hubert, in the paper mentioned earlier, outlined the results of a pilot study the Hartford Public Schools carried out to determine differential costs of special programs for language minority students in 1987-88. Using a formula and guidelines developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education for separating costs unique to bilingual services, they came up with $4 million in estimated costs for both bilingual and ESL programs in 1987-88. This figure contrasts sharply with the earlier report from the Hartford Public Schools of spending $29 million in that year for their language minority students! (Prince and Hubert,30)

Prince and Hubert make an important point about the dangers of reporting inaccurate figures: "Regrettably, the total estimated expenditures which have been reported have fueled the perception that bilingual education programs are costly and wasteful, leading the State Board of Education, the state legislature, and the public to question the cost effectiveness of the entire educational program." (p.6)

While the ALEC report clearly favors the ESL approach over the bilingual approach (repeatedly emphasizing that while more has been spent on bilingual programs, no proof exists of their superiority), its intention, does seem to be to encourage all programs to truly meet the needs of language minority children. Still, proponents of one methodology should be careful that their attempts to discredit another methodology do not endanger funding for all types of bilingual education.

- While the cost figures may be seriously overestimated, the ALEC report points up the great lack of accountability in bilingual education. States are spending a great deal of money on bilingual programs, but we have little idea of how much the programs actually cost and how cost effective the successful ones are.

- Although state and federal programs across the United States are definitely spending much more on bilingual than ESL programs, this does not mean that bilingual programs necessarily cost more than ESL ones. Conventional wisdom says that ESL programs cost more than bilingual programs because no additional teacher is needed when the bilingual teacher does all the instruction--native language, academic subjects, English--in a self-contained classroom. ESL teachers hired as resource teachers who pull students out in small groups for English instruction definitely constitute an additional expense. However, there are other considerations.

For example, the content-based approach to ESL instruction allows regular classroom teachers with some ESL training to teach LEP students English and their academic subjects at the same time. Also, it's not clear what other costs might be incurred in a bilingual program--for such items as native language textbooks, native language assessment materials, and additional special reading teachers for the native language.

Finally, the number of years required for mainstreaming LEP students is definitely a consideration. In the El Paso study (Gersten, Woodward, and Schneider, 29-30), bilingual program students were in Transitional Bilingual Education classes for five to seven years while English immersion students stayed in special classes for only three to four years. A difference of one to three years represents a large extra cost.

In the New York City report, *Educational Progress of Students in Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs,* reviewed in this issue of READ Perspectives, the costs seem to be about equal. A summary of the high school budget for LEP students shows $23.3 million for bilingual instruction programs and $24.8 million for ESL programs for fiscal year 1994. These figures, communicated in a memo to the Chancellor of Education for New York City, are based on budget summaries and thus may not constitute actual costs. However, in this same memo, additional costs per LEP student are given--$974 per pupil in community school districts and $1215 per pupil in the high schools, which suggests that the budget figures do reflect differential costs, costs beyond what the average English-speaking student requires.

- Finally, cost is certainly not the only factor in deciding which type of program to adopt. Program effectiveness, measured by student achievement, is the bottom line. However, increased interest in cost analysis bodes well for the whole field of bilingual education. Cost studies reinforce the move toward greater accountability in special programs for language minority children, which this study shows to be seriously lacking. Costs and results are naturally linked. Once we start to look at costs, it is natural to look next at outcomes. How successfully has the money been spent? The ALEC study appropriately raises this question.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT NON-COST CONCERNS FROM THE ALEC STUDY

In its survey of numbers of students and costs of different programs, the ALEC report discovered some major problems with bilingual education. Perhaps its most important contribution is to point out what has been slipping through the cracks--students, programs, and money.

- Almost 20 percent of LEP students are not in any special program of instruction. Half of these are in California, the state with far and away the largest number of limited-English students--over one million. That means there are many language minority children who are not receiving any help at all but are having to go it alone.

Why is this? Do the solutions seem too complicated to implement? Is it a question of a lack of funds to put a program in place? Are solutions not being adapted to local circumstances? Are parents refusing to place their children in special programs? But beyond these questions is the urgent question of results: What is the school achievement of LEP students who are not given special help? Are they failing in greater numbers?

The ALEC report suggests, but does not state, that inflexibility in choice of methodology may be one reason that so many students are not being enrolled in any special program. The authors urge that we remain flexible at the local level in choosing a methodology because of the "ethnic diversity found in many communities....Therefore, even when a school district is philosophically committed to bilingual education, in reality it may be impossible to hire the qualified native language teachers for the many languages represented in their schools." And again, "Shortages of qualified bilingual teachers exist in all schools, making it impossible to meet the language needs of all LEP students in their home language."(ALEC,3)

The implication is that if states insist on one methodology only, such as the bilingual one in this case, and schools lack the resources to implement this particular methodology, then many students may end up without any special language program. The ALEC report puts our focus back where it belongs: "Beyond the debate over methodologies, all children must be taught English and provided with equal access to educational opportunities."(ALEC,3) As Dr. Rosalie Porter proposed in her review of the GAO study, let the local school districts receive federal funds on a per capita basis and use the money on the programs that best fit their circumstances. (Porter, 20-21)

- Almost 15 percent of LEP students are enrolled in programs characterized as "Unknown." The ALEC report estimates that $2.4 billion is being spent on these programs.

While the actual amount may be overblown, it is disturbing that a large amount of money is basically not accounted for. States seem to have LEP students enrolled in programs they are not able to describe. However, the authors admit this may be the result of confused data collection rather than states really not understanding what their programs are. For example, Florida reported duplicate data for both ESL and bilingual programs, so the ALEC study put the duplicates in the "unknown" category to avoid inflating the totals incorrectly for the other two programs.

The ALEC report also surmises that this category, "Unknown," suggests that there may be little agreement across the U.S. on names and descriptions of types of special language programs for LEPs. For instance, states may not recognize that TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is just another acronym for ESL programs, not a distinct program. Therefore, some states may have put TESOL programs in the "Unknown" category, not knowing where they fit.

- There are no consistent means across the U.S. of determining who is a limited-English proficient student. In other words, there's not a single, or even several, tests that are uniformly used to assess whether students really have "sufficient difficulty" reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English to warrant providing them with a special program that develops their ability to learn in English. Therefore, some students may be mistakenly placed in bilingual or ESL programs. Other students may fail to be identified as needing special help. The over- or under-identification of LEP students is a well-known phenomenon.

- Data on LEP students may not be collected at the state and local level, simply because it is not mandated by the federal government. Thus it is difficult for educators and policymakers to get the figures they need in order to judge how much different programs cost for LEP students.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The concerns raised in the ALEC study suggest a number of directions for research and action to help educate language minority students more effectively.

### 1. Provide state and local districts with formulas and guidelines to accurately estimate the costs of bilingual education.

As the ALEC report concludes, we have to go the state and local level to see what real costs of bilingual education are "since the overwhelming majority of education funds come from state and local sources."(ALEC,8) Federal education funds account for only 6 percent of education funding in the United States. If more states could follow Connecticut's example in creating pilot programs to assess differential costs, then we could correct misconceptions about the amount of money it will take to do the job.

Prince and Hubert suggest an excellent shortcut for other districts needing a less complicated and less time-consuming method of assessing differential costs. Since the Hartford Public Schools found that 95 percent of the costs of special programs were staffing costs, focusing on staffing costs alone would save a lot of time and trouble for other programs. A program could do an accurate cost analysis without tracking down a whole array of expenses like supplies, equipment, and instructional and assessment materials. Instead, programs could estimate the salaries, fringe benefits, substitute teacher costs, longevity--everything associated with staff costs--of instructional staff and administrators hired mainly to work with language minority children. Like Connecticut, other programs could develop formulas for determining which were differential costs. For instance, the Hartford Schools decided that if a teacher spent 85 percent of his/her time with LEP's, then 100 percent of that salary would count as differential cost. On the other hand, salaries of those who spent less than 15% of their time with LEP students would not be counted as differential cost at all. Those working with limited-English students 50 percent of the time would have 50 percent of their salaries, etc. counted as costs of bilingual education. (Prince and Hubert, 28-29)

While such cost studies do require careful planning and coordination, models do exist that will simplify the task and yield more precise figures. These figures would greatly increase state and local accountability.

**2. Compare the costs and outcomes of bilingual and ESL programs across the United States.**

A starting point would be to gather differential cost data for longitudinal studies that have already been done. Such data would prevent proponents of the different methodologies from using cost as a reason for discrediting a particular methodology. For example, the recent GAO study, *Limited-English Proficiency: A Growing and Costly Challenge Facing Many School Districts,* says that "The Department-funded study, as well as experiences in the districts we visited, indicate that incorporating these nonbilingual approaches could require substantial time and resources." (GAO,16) This bold statement appears to discourage the consideration of English-language intensive programs for LEP students.

On the other hand, Dr. Rosalie Porter, in her review of this GAO study, states: "Compared to the costs and time needed to implement a full bilingual program--essentially setting up entirely separate schooling--the development of an English-intensive program requires a relatively modest investment." (Porter,18) Comparisons of differential costs of these two instructional approaches would offer some hard data for making clear decisions: is one type of program appreciably more expensive than the other?

Such comparisons need to consider measurable outcomes as well as costs for ESL and bilingual programs answering such questions as:

—How many years, on the average, does it take for LEP students in different programs to enter mainstream academic classes?

—What percentage of LEP students in bilingual and ESL programs are able to take all courses required for high school graduation? ("Able" meaning to have the opportunity because they are proficient enough in academic subjects and in English to allow them to enroll in classes required for graduation.)

—Has the school dropout rate among language-minority children decreased in schools with bilingual and ESL programs? Accurate reports on these outcomes are crucial to achieving the goal of ensuring that the greatest number of limited-English students have the opportunity to receive the education they need to become productive, successful citizens.

**3. Require greater accountability by putting stricter requirements on state and local programs to report numbers of LEP students and costs of programs.**

Follow-up on LEP students not being served by any program to prevent large numbers of students from falling through the cracks. Why are they not being served by any program? Is it a matter of parental choice? Is the main problem the lack of qualified native language teachers?

**4. Agree on common assessment tools across the states.**

What tests work best? What level of reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension in English would require students to be placed in or exit from bilingual education programs at specific grade levels? Unfortunately, because programs are often awarded funds based on numbers of students who need help, programs may not accurately report numbers of students ready to exit for fear of losing funds. Funding sources could instead offer incentives for exiting by giving bonuses to programs with higher rates of mainstreaming LEP students.

**5. Encourage more studies of which instructional methods really work with the greatest number of students.**

The ALEC report says, "There are excellent schools that are succeeding in educating LEP students." What are these schools doing? What do successful programs that help students from different languages and cultures have in common? Tikunoff et al. took an important step toward answering these questions in their study, *Descriptive Study of Significant Features of Exemplary Special Alternative Instructional Programs.* They selected nine programs across the United States that exhibited outstanding performance by their students for two years in a row based on a combination of factors: increased proficiency in English, improved academic performance, time needed to mainstream students, and rates of meeting promotion requirements for the next grade level.(Gersten et al.,60) Then they did a factor analysis of the practices used in these schools.

A review in the January 1995 issue of READ Perspectives pointed to two "overarching findings" of Tikunoff et al. on effective practices:

– teachers integrated principles of effective instruction with English language development in subject areas, and

– aspects of the learning environment promoted active use of English. (Gersten, et al., 78)

**6. Collect data on costs of training teachers in ESL, content-based instruction.**

How long would it take and how much would it cost to train teachers and administrators in such effective practices as the Tikunoff study suggests? These practices are essentially non-bilingual and therefore adaptable to many situations. Even though the GAO study suggested that training teachers in non-bilingual techniques could be a costly endeavor, it concludes with a recognition of the need for training.

> In many cases, the most critical aspect in successfully implementing these changes will be training classroom teachers—whose college training often does not prepare them to deal with today's culturally and linguistically diverse students. Therefore, we believe the nation needs to continue efforts to effectively serve LEP students in non-bilingual as well as bilingual settings, and developing a teaching force prepared to educate these students should be a top priority." (GAO, 15)

More obviously needs to be done, and answers to the cost question will help to determine what can be feasible and productive. Should every teacher be an ESL teacher to some degree, capable of teaching school subjects and developing English language skills at the same time? Given the rapidly growing numbers of LEP students and their increasing enrollment in public schools across the United States, it is safe to assume that all teachers will eventually have these students in their classrooms. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to recommend some level of training for all teachers in meeting the needs of LEP students in the most productive ways—ways that lead to higher rates of mainstreaming, promotion, and high school graduation.

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# THE BETHLEHEM, PA, ENGLISH ACQUISITION PROGRAM: A BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

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Demographic predictions indicate that the significant increase in the number of language minority students attending the nation's public schools will continue well past the year 2,000 (Arias, 1986; Robey, 1984; Toch & Lennon, 1980). In a six year period (1985-1991), the population of K-12 students for whom English is not a native language enrolled in U. S. public schools increased by 51.3 percent (Olson, 1993) to nearly 2.3 million students (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). The population of Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students is expected to continue to grow at two and one-half times the rate of English-speaking students by the year 2,000 (US Congressional Record, 1989); and it is anticipated that the population of non-native speakers of English in the nation's schools will reach 3.5 million by that year, and 6 million by the year 2020 (Pallas et al, 1989). Many school districts are hard pressed to determine how best to educate these students.

The following article describes and evaluates the progress of one school system in Pennsylvania, the Bethlehem Area School District, in its efforts to serve the needs of that portion of the student population (10%) requiring some level of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction. (Authors' Note: English as a Second Language [ESL] and ESOL are interchangeable terms. Most U.S. programs for LEP students use "ESL"; Bethlehem prefers to use "ESOL".) The district has recently shifted from a bilingual education program where most of the classroom instruction was in Spanish to a focus on English language learning. The first section of this article describes the program and the rationale for change. Detailed description of this kind helps readers understand what one school system is doing and why.

The second section of this article determines, through a formative evaluation, the strengths and weaknesses that emerged in the first two years of the new program's implementation, and offers recommendations for improvements. The data reported here will be most useful to educators and administrators considering new options for language minority students.

The authors extend their grateful appreciation to the administrators, teachers and staff of the Bethlehem district for their encouragement, for their contributions of time and effort in providing the necessary data, and for the opportunities to observe classrooms and hold discussions with staff members, which contributed so much to this study.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

At the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year, the Bethlehem Area School District replaced its primary language program for limited-English students with a variation of a structured immersion model called the "English Acquisition Program." This article examines the program's design and its relationship to the district's comprehensive curriculum, as well as the formative and summative evaluation paradigm developed for the purpose of assessing and refining the program's strengths and weaknesses. Data from surveys administered after the first year to the professional staff and parents or guardians of students in the program is presented, as well as the results of a qualitative, responsive analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) made by Judith Simons-Turner and Mark J. Connelly, S.J., of St. Joseph's University in May and June of 1995. An informal evaluation of the program after two years of implementation is provided by Ann Goldberg, Program Coordinator. A brief overview of the plans for a longitudinal summative evaluation is outlined. Finally, general recommendations are offered for consideration by other school districts considering the development of a structured immersion program for their limited-English students.

## DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

The Bethlehem Area School District is located in Northampton and Lehigh counties in northeastern Pennsylvania. The community has a population of approximately 100,000 and is presently serving 12,966 students of whom 23 percent are Hispanics, 4 percent are African-Americans, and 1 percent are Asian. Approximately 60 percent of the students in the district are residents of the city of Bethlehem, 30 percent are from the suburbs of the city, and 10 percent from the adjacent rural area of the community. Currently, one out of four children enrolled in the Bethlehem district is from an economically disadvantaged home. As such, 20 percent of the students participate in the federally sponsored free/reduced lunch program; and approximately 10 percent reside in federally sponsored subsidized housing, while another 5 percent live in low-income center city housing. There is presently a significant rate of unemployment in the district (6.1 percent), largely due to a long-term decline in the steel and garment manufacturing industries which had been the major source of employment in the area.

Bethlehem's English Acquisition Program presently includes approximately 1,300 students in the first through twelfth grades. The home language of the majority of the language minority students is Spanish (86 percent); however, 14 percent of the students speak a variety of other languages including Portuguese, Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Farsi, Greek, Turkish, Russian, Polish, Czech, Arabic, German, Italian and a few African languages.

## CONTEXT FOR PROGRAM CHANGE

For almost 20 years, the Bethlehem schools had provided bilingual education for its limited-English students but by 1992 the district's superintendent, Thomas J. Doluisio, was becoming increasingly concerned about student achievement. Of special concern was the length of time typically required for LEP students to achieve sufficient fluency in English to be able to learn school subjects in a regular, mainstream, classroom and to be able to participate in the extracurricular opportunities offered by the school district. The superintendent had observed that even the most academically talented language minority students frequently failed to enroll in advanced placement courses in the high schools. Furthermore, he noted that many of the language minority students did not participate in many high school activities, although they had taken part in extracurricular events in their bilingual program schools. The superintendent believes that it is important for students to be integrated into the mainstream student body, and to have the opportunity to achieve success among their peers.

Social integration between the language majority and language minority students was not occurring at the high schools, so that important opportunities to develop an appreciation of cultural diversity by all students were not being fostered. Hypothesizing that this trend was most probably a function of the fact that the students enrolled in the bilingual programs seldom attend their neighborhood schools, the superintendent came to the conclusion that a program change was needed if LEP students were to have an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

The superintendent expressed these additional concerns about the bilingual education program model:

> 1) while the bilingual program schools had extensive curriculum relating to the appreciation of diversity and celebrations of ethnic cultures, the mainstream students were not included in these valuable experiences and often had minimal social interaction with bilingual students
>
> 2) while the bilingual program provided quality programming for native language instruction in Spanish, the largest language group, there were increasing numbers of other language minority groups for which it was not economically or educationally feasible to provide bilingual education services
>
> 3) certified teachers who are bilingual in languages such as Vietnamese, Russian and Lebanese were difficult to find and research data indicated that the number of talented young adults of these language backgrounds entering the teaching profession was in fact decreasing
>
> 4) the drop-out rate of the Hispanic students did not appear to be ameliorated by their participation in the bilingual education program.

The superintendent came to the conclusion that all language minority students need to gain English fluency as quickly as possible if they are to receive the highest quality educational program. He began reviewing available research on educational programs for LEP students, and simultaneously interviewed experts in language minority education including administrators from various districts who had extensive experience with a variety of programs for language minority students. These included Fairfax County and Arlington City school districts in Virginia, as well as university researchers and specialists in the field of language minority education.

Discovering that the research results were largely ambivalent in regard to the benefits of primary language and bilingual education programs (e.g. Danoff, 1977; Baker and deKanter, 1981; Gersten, Woodward and Schneider, 1992; Ramirez, 1991; Willig, 1985), he decided to propose a model that would focus on developing English language fluency as quickly as possible while, at the same time, affirming language minority students' home languages and culture.

A series of meetings with district administrators and school directors were held in the fall of 1992 and winter of 1993, to examine the available data on successful English immersion programs for language minority students across the United States. These informational meetings became the first step in the eventual decision by the school directors to implement a new program with the primary goal of early English acquisition.

The superintendent's proposal to make a change in the program for limited-English students provoked considerable controversy among principals and teachers, as many were convinced that the primary language program was the only approach that would meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the language minority students. Some of their objections to the recommendations for change centered on such issues as: a recognized urgency to educate more bilingual Americans in the interests of the country's ability to engage in global competition; the fear that the parents of limited-English students would not participate in their children's education if the Spanish primary language program was eliminated; the potential of emotional harm to the children if their home language was not affirmed, or if the emphasis on English at school resulted in students' eventual inability to communicate with family members.

Several groups and individuals did, in fact, make presentations at board meetings arguing for the maintenance of the Spanish primary language program, but in February, 1993, the Bethlehem Board of School Directors voted to replace the bilingual education program with a program whose focus would be English language acquisition. The primary goal for the new program was "to have all language minority students in the district become fluent in the English language in the shortest amount of time possible to maximize their opportunity to succeed in school," (Bethlehem document) and to prepare them more fully for higher education or for worthwhile jobs upon graduating from high school. It should be noted that the superintendent and school directors defined "success" in a broader sense, focusing not only on academic achievement but on the students' social and emotional development. Another way of expressing the school districts' criteria of "success" for this group of students is to expect its programs to turn out high school graduates who function well as bilingual adults leading productive, fulfilling lives in the community at large.

Community and staff reaction to the proposed program changes intensified. Some community members, both those in favor and against the program change, actively lobbied school directors and administrators. While many staff members viewed the change as positive and necessary because of their concern over the delays in English language learning due to the instructional emphasis on Spanish, others supported extending native language instruction through the middle school and high school years.

Many parents of Spanish-speaking children interviewed by one of the authors of this article applauded the new English acquisition emphasis, asserting that their children's chances for future success would be improved by a program in which they became more fluent in English (Soto and Turner, unpublished study, 1993). These parents pointed out the difficulties they had themselves experienced in seeking employment and social acceptance in the community due to their lack of fluency in English, and asserted that they did not want their children to repeat the same experience. They declared that it is the school district's responsibility to prepare their children to function successfully in the English speaking community. Some of these parents stated that they themselves were taking the responsibility to teach their children their home language and culture, and that the district should teach them "English" and "whatever they need to know to get the best jobs."

In contrast, some community leaders, teachers and principals stated their belief in the research indicating that it is easier for children to learn literacy skills in their first language and that the skills would quickly transfer to English (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1989; Krashen and Biber, 1988; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1983).

Media coverage was extensive and further aggravated the controversy, with local newspaper and television reporting of the change sometimes characterizing it as "racist" or at the least "ethnocentric." (e.g., *Morning Call*, September 22, 1992; October 18, 1992).

Additionally, although some administrators agreed with the program change in principle, they questioned its immediate design and implementation, asserting that at least a year of planning was necessary to make an effective transition. Ultimately however, it was decided by the school directors that the program change was to be implemented in the fall of 1993, and a leadership team was immediately formed with the responsibility of designing the new "English Acquisition Program." The decision to develop a program locally and not just adopt a successful program from another district was based on the belief that the probability of success would be greater if the teachers and administrative staff of the district were directly involved, given their knowledge of the academic needs of language minority students and their sensitivity to local issues. This approach to the design and implementation of new or radically changed program models has been well documented in the literature and is especially effective when there is mixed reaction to the proposed change (Hall and Hord, 1987: Joyce and Showers, 1988; Showers, Joyce et al, 1987; Hord et al, 1987).

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Program design began in February of 1993. A team of district staff members under the leadership of Dr. Michele Kostem, Assistant Superintendent, met weekly for full day planning sessions. Bilingual program teachers and the former director of the bilingual education program participated on this team, as well as key school principals, reading specialists, guidance counselors, teachers and the directors of elementary and secondary education. The first report by the English Acquisition Design Team, *A Ticket for Tomorrow* was published in May, 1993, with an introductory statement reaffirming the prime goal of this program to be that all LEP students would become fluent in English as quickly as possible in order to have access to maximum opportunity for success in school.

While some of the work of the design team was conducted by the committee as a whole, subcommittees were responsible for much of the design of the English Acquisition Program by levels--elementary, middle, and high school. Members of the design team visited program sites in the Fairfax County School District and engaged in extensive discussions regarding context, strategies, and training.

The committee as a whole decided to classify limited-English students into three levels based on their fluency in receptive and expressive language, and their reading and writing in English. Three levels were designated: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Descriptions of each of these levels appear in Appendix A. Acknowledgment is made to the Fairfax County School District for sharing materials, particularly their proficiency descriptions, with the team.

It should be noted that a fourth category or level for language minority students, designated "low schooled," was used to describe middle school and secondary school students who have some or all of the following characteristics: beginning English-language learner; not attending school on a regular basis; atypical in terms of discrepancy between age and grade placement; underdeveloped math concepts; and lack of knowledge of school social norms" (Design Team, English Acquisition Program, 1993). This designation was made for the purpose of clarifying the difference between students who were simply having academic problems due to their limited English skills, and students who might be failing due to causes other than language difference such as poor or non-attendance or lack of knowledge of appropriate school behaviors.

Because of the considerable disparity among the number of language minority students in each of the district's sixteen elementary schools, each school was categorized based on the percentage of LEP students in the student body:

1. High impact schools - 40-50% of the student body consists of limited-English students

2. Medium impact schools - 12-30% of the student body consists of LEP students

3. Low impact schools - only 0-7% of the students are of Limited-English Proficiency.

High impact schools are given a reduced student-teacher ratio of approximately 22 to 1 rather than the typical district average of 24-26/1. Moderate impact schools also have reduced class sizes when large numbers of language minority students are served at a particular grade level.

Language minority students are generally distributed among the classrooms at each grade level. At the high and moderate impact schools, students in the beginner level of English Acquisition are given 75 minutes of ESOL instruction daily. Intermediate and advanced level English learners are given 45 minutes of ESOL instruction three times per week. At low impact schools, itinerant ESOL teachers schedule sessions for small groups of students from two to four times per week.

Additional support may be provided for these students at the request of individual schools by tutors who are called "second language guides." These second language guides work under the direction of the ESOL teachers and are particularly helpful for students whose home languages are ones other than Spanish.

A Center for Language Assessment (CLA) was planned as an integral part of the English Acquisition Program. In contrast with the district's former assessment center, the new center does not play a major role in moving students from one category of English language proficiency to another, or in exiting students from the program. The design team believed that the decision to change a student's classification is best left to building level professionals who work with these students on a daily basis. Ongoing assessments done in the classroom have more validity than the narrow language sampling done by a central office-based assessor who is unfamiliar with the child.

The English Acquisition program was developed as a flexible model, adjustable at each of the three levels (elementary, middle and secondary) to meet the needs of the particular school. This flexibility would best serve the different students in each building and accommodate organizational differences in the scheduling and instructional design. For example, the elementary schools use self-contained classrooms while the middle schools and high schools are departmentalized and employ team teaching. In addition, depending upon their location within the city, some schools serve a significantly larger number of students who speak a language other than English in their homes. The English Acquisition Program provides services that simultaneously support the language minority students' content learning as mandated by the district's K-12 curriculum, while promoting the rapid development of the English language.

## THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODEL

Kindergarten students are not served by the ESOL teachers. They receive a language-rich curriculum totally in English based on integrated thematic units. Each language minority student is tested in kindergarten for English-language proficiency by the central office assessor using the PRE-LAS (Avila and Duncan, 1986) during Kindergarten registration, and is then retested at the end of Kindergarten to measure growth and to determine the level of English Acquisition service needed by the child in the first grade.

Research and practical experience have demonstrated that second language training is most effective when it is conducted through communication of meaningful information (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). ESL professionals, reading supervisors and curriculum specialists recommend that organizing the teaching of content area subjects around thematically integrated units is an approach that helps students to learn subject matter while simultaneously acquiring English language skills through listening, speaking, reading and writing (Freeman & Freeman, 1992). The overall goals of the elementary school model are to integrate LEP students into heterogeneous classes; to promote oral language development through the use of literature-based reading and writing instruction; to accelerate learning for all students; to reduce fragmentation by coordinating the LEP student's regular classroom and ESOL classroom educational programs, thus encouraging the development of cognitive connections.

The specific design of ESOL instruction is implemented with some variation at individual elementary schools. At some schools, primary level (grades 1-3) ESOL instruction is a "push-in" model with ESOL teachers and classroom teachers co-teaching the language arts and reading. In these classrooms, the teachers take turns in assuming responsibility for direct instruction, with one teaching a lesson while the other moves inconspicuously around the room helping limited-English students, when necessary, by clarifying concepts or the activation of prior knowledge. This allows for assessment of individual students' patterns of skill acquisition in English. At other schools, the more traditional "pull-out" model is used in which language minority students receive instruction from the ESOL teacher in separate classrooms for 75 minutes daily. However, in all ESOL instruction the emphasis is on providing students with background knowledge, on clarifying concepts that will be presented by the regular classroom teacher at a later time, and on reteaching skills and content which may be difficult for LEP students when they are first introduced by the classroom teacher.

ESOL teachers employ a variety of strategies to engage students in reading, writing, speaking and listening in response to curriculum content in English at the appropriate grade level. Children are consistently engaged in meaningful uses of the English language.

All elementary students were served in their home schools during the 1993-1995 school years with the exception of the beginner level students in one school who were reassigned because of overcrowding.

## THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MODEL

The cornerstone of the middle school level English Acquisition Program is the team concept of Bethlehem's middle school plan. LEP students are assigned to a traditional academic team of teachers who have common planning time to discuss academic preparation and to resolve concerns about students' academic progress or behavior. Important to the middle school model is the vital role of the advisor (homeroom teacher) in the life of the student. All LEP students are assigned to an advisor/advisee group within their appropriate grade level and team. The advisors are responsible for assigning a "buddy" to each language minority student in his/her group, and of fostering English language acquisition through the support and encouragement of these "buddy" relationships. Establishing such a pairing provides language minority students with an immediate, on-going, social opportunity. A special activity period to train "buddies" is part of the plan.

A vital aspect of the middle school program is the "extended day," a formal tutoring period offered to all limited-English students from 3:00 to 3:45 p.m. each school day. Staffed by the ESOL teacher, this program offers the students opportunities for peer tutoring, mentor tutoring, homework help, and serves as a center where students can receive the extra support they need in any of the content areas.

Middle school LEP students are classified into four English proficiency levels: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and low-schooled, and this determines their course enrollment. All students in the district who are classified as "beginners" attend one middle school which provides them with a special approach to subject matter instruction and simultaneous teaching of English language. The academic program for beginners consists of three periods of ESOL instruction (delivered by the ESOL teacher), one period of mathematics by a regular mathematics teacher, and one period of science or social studies courses delivered by the content teachers daily (each content area is taught for one semester). An additional academic teacher joins the beginner student class for language arts and reading instruction, thereby providing the advantage of two full-time teachers in each beginner class. All beginner students receive two periods of related arts (music, art, etc.) with their "buddies" weekly, and interact with native speakers of English during the advisee/advisor lunch, arts and activity periods each week.

The program for students with intermediate level English language skills is provided in the neighborhood school. The academic program consists of two periods of ESOL daily, and instruction in mathematics, science, and social studies classes with regular academic teachers. The grading in science and social studies is "A/S/N" ("A"=excellent, "S"=satisfactory, "N"= not satisfactory), rather than the traditional "A" through "F" designations.

Advanced level students are also assigned to their home schools and receive a regular program of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies as well as one period of ESOL daily. They are also assigned to a regular advisor/advisee lunch and related arts classes with their "buddies." Hence, they interact with native speakers of English throughout the school day.

## THE HIGH SCHOOL MODEL

The high school program (grades nine through twelve) had been an English language instructional program prior to the introduction of the English Acquisition Program. The revised model has two tracks:

1. a curriculum to meet the needs of students who typically take mostly business and vocational-technical courses and who generally plan to enter the work force upon graduation from high school

2. a curriculum which enables students to participate in mainstream classes 30-40% of the time the first year; 55% of the time the second year; and 75-80% of the time the third year and which prepares them to attend institutes of higher education. (see Appendix B, Bethlehem Area School District Secondary Program of Studies)

All students in the English Acquisition program attend Liberty High School where the design team planned a resource room set up with computers, printers and a variety of software to meet the needs of both low schooled and typical learners for remediation activities, high interest/low reading level materials, and more typical learning materials such as word processing programs, course reviews, ESOL software, etc. LEP students are assigned to this resource room instead of to a traditional study hall.

The design team also recommended a mentor program involving both student mentors and adult mentors to advise LEP students on academic and social situations, on survival skills for high school life, and to help the student learning English to focus on personal long term goals.

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Monitoring student progress is critical to the success of the English Acquisition Program. Three phases of student monitoring are employed regardless of the age of the student in the program: 1) initial testing by the Center for Language Assessment, 2) on-going monitoring of progress and 3) exit evaluations.

### 1. Initial Testing

The Center for Language Assessment tests students and passes on the information to the schools to assure appropriate placement of students. The Center for Language Assessment uses the LAS-O (Avila, 1990), and the Pre-LAS (Avila, 1986) which may be administered in either English or Spanish, or both, to assess oral proficiency in one or both languages.

The Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills (Brigance, 1983) is used to measure English reading and Spanish reading for Latino students. A writing sample is taken, and secondary school students are given a basic mathematics test that was adapted from the test used for this same population in the Fairfax County School District. An evaluator at the Center reviews the tests for oral proficiency, reading and writing, and these scores are entered into the data base for each student as a base-line level against which future growth may be measured.

Students who score at the fluent level on the LAS scales, and whose English reading and writing skills are at grade level are identified as "regular education students" and they do not enter the English Acquisition Program. However, students are not presumed ready for the regular classroom solely from the results of one standardized test. For example, a seventh grade student who scores at level 5 (fluent English speaker) on the LAS-O, but who has only a second grade level of English reading skills would be classified as an intermediate level student in the English Acquisition Program. Through this assessment process, the English Acquisition Program avoids one problem that is frequently associated with structured immersion models. Educators often do not understand that a student's ability to engage in fluent English conversations with peers and staff does not necessarily mean that he or she has a sufficient command of the language to successfully master the context-reduced material from the district curriculum.

### 2. On-going Monitoring of Student Progress

A progress evaluation of every student in the English Acquisition Program occurs twice each year, in the first and last quarters of the school year. It is after these assessments have been conducted that recommendations for changes of program level are made in the home school. The design committee agreed that beginner, intermediate, advanced and competent (exit) levels were to be defined through descriptions of classroom proficiencies. Each level of oral proficiency (1-6), reading (1-8), and writing (1-5) is described in the "Stages of English Language Acquisition" (See Appendix A). This chart graphically portrays the skills to be mastered at each level of competency in oral language, reading and writing in order for students to move on to the higher levels of the program and be able to function in a mainstream classroom without ESOL support. The program relies on building-based decision-making to determine progress in English language fluency.

### 3. Exit evaluations

Readiness for exit from the English Acquisition Program is decided by a team of teachers appointed by the principal and is reviewed by the English Acquisition Program Coordinator. Exited students' progress is monitored for a full year to ensure success in the regular program. The school principal assigns the ESOL teacher and the student's classroom teacher the responsibility of documenting each student's oral language, reading and writing capability. For reading assessment, a photocopy of a passage which the student can read and retell successfully, and a copy of the retelling scoring sheet is kept in the student's portfolio. A copy of one of the student's writing samples, taken from actual classroom work, is also added to the student's portfolio. The stages of oral language, reading, and writing are recorded on the appropriate form which is then signed by all team members. One of the teachers informs parents of the program change for their child and all documentation is then sent to the Center for review by the English Language Acquisition Program Coordinator who is responsible for overseeing student progress.

## STRONG LEADERSHIP

The design team and the district administration recognized that the program would need strong leadership due to the divergent perspectives of the staff. At the same time it was understood that the program administrator would have to earnestly encourage innovation and flexibility in order to meet the needs of the various district schools and students. Therefore, the position of Program Coordinator was created, and there was general agreement among administration and staff that the leadership and negotiation skills of this administrator would need to be of a superior nature to ensure a smooth transition to the new English Acquisition Program and to allow the program's on-going refinement and improvement.

The Program Coordinator is responsible for all aspects of the education of language minority students, K-12. Responsibilities of this position include developing and administering an annual budget; maintaining the monitoring system for each student in the program; making hiring recommendations for new ESOL staff to principals; supervising the Title VII grant disseminator (PIAGET); overseeing the Center for Language Assessment office, including a full time tester; reviewing and providing materials for administrators and teachers; developing in-service training for ESOL and classroom teachers; working closely with principals to solve problems related to the new program; and, occasionally, dealing with individual student issues.

## PREPARING THE TEACHING STAFF

The foundations on which the English Acquisition Program rest include a review of research and theory on second language acquisition and the education of language minority children, as well as on the opinions of experts and the experiences of professionals working with LEP students. Opinions about second language learning and the most effective strategies for teaching language minority students varied considerably among the members of the design team. It is certain that all team members shared a basic commitment to developing the highest quality program possible for promoting both English language learning and academic achievement. Sufficient effort was put into staff development to ensure that the new approach was understood prior to program implementation, and this factor most definitely has contributed to the smooth transition from one program to another.

The design team defined the essential factors for student success in the English Acquisition Program and these criteria were presented to staff prior to the initiation of the program and are regularly reinforced through staff development. Several of these elements are common to all levels of program operation, regardless of grade levels or English proficiency levels of the students.

## GUIDELINES COMMON TO ALL LEVELS, K-12

Staff was advised that the assignment of most of the LEP students to their neighborhood or home schools, and the placement of most language minority students in linguistically mixed classrooms would have a major positive impact on the motivation of these children to learn English. However, design team members were realistic about the potential for initial confusion and anxiety on the part of students who had previously been taught almost entirely in their native language.

The provision of a handbook for teachers detailing strategies for dealing with the potential problems was very reassuring, especially for those teachers in low and medium impact schools who might not have worked previously with limited-English students. Teachers were encouraged to create opportunities for socialization and cooperation among language majority and language minority students.

Staff development is essential to the success of a new program and a substantial number of workshops by consultants who are experts in the field of language minority education were provided in the first two years and are an on-going feature of the English Acquisition Program. Workshops are not required, however, teachers are strongly encouraged to attend and they are availing themselves of these opportunities to acquire new skills and strategies.

### 1. Teacher Collaboration

A keystone of the English Acquisition Program is the collaboration between regular classroom teachers and ESOL teachers. In order for ESOL teachers to give students the background knowledge necessary for understanding content lessons and for actively engaging in classroom learning activities, they need to be constantly aware of both the difficulties common to students learning a second language and the specific problems of individual students. These difficulties are most easily observed and identified by the classroom teacher; however, the ESOL teachers need to know of problem areas in order to provide support for content area learning.

Thus, the program design team recognized the critical role of on-going, scheduled communication and cooperation between the classroom teachers and the ESOL teachers. The emphasis on this collaboration provides a stronger continuity between ESOL instruction and regular classroom instruction than is typical in structured immersion models. An important characteristic of the English Acquisition Program is that ESOL instruction does not focus on the teaching of "English lessons" or on teaching isolated English vocabulary or grammar, but stresses the learning of curriculum content, vocabulary, and grammar simultaneously.

### 2. Adapting Curriculum and Pedagogy

Another critical element in fostering success of the language minority students at all grade levels (1-12) is the need for regular classroom teachers to engage in ongoing curriculum adaptation. Such adaptation can take a variety of forms. However, classroom teachers are expected to use their judgment in adapting curriculum, even if it initially involves a sacrifice of "form" in favor of "content" acquisition. Teachers' understanding of the rationale, strategies and techniques for adapting the standard district curriculum is vital to the success of the program. Both elementary teachers and content area teachers in the middle school and the high school must continually monitor student progress in order to determine what adaptations in structure or format will assure the greatest opportunity for LEP students to use prior knowledge to master the district curriculum.

Teachers are trained to use "scaffolding," i.e., sequential learning, and the concept of a "zone of proximal distance" (Vygotsky, 1978) to accomplish this end. The English Acquisition Program emphasizes that adaptation must be flexible, determined by the teacher on the basis of the competency and needs of the students in a particular classroom. This type of adaptation is absolutely crucial to successful learning of school subjects by LEP children as they learn English. Structured immersion programs that do not provide for teachers' thorough understanding of this construct may, in the end, be less effective than those that are successful in building commitment to curriculum adaptation by all staff.

Teachers may adapt the nature of the instruction, making it hands-on, rich in real objects and illustrations, rather than lecture. For beginner and intermediate level students, teachers may modify the assignments, requiring fewer spelling words (selecting those with the highest frequency), or requiring mastery of only three to five of the major concepts in social studies texts, rather than the entire set of chapter objectives. Teachers are encouraged to modify their evaluation procedures when needed, such as giving a test orally, having the ESOL teacher administer the test, or requiring the mastery of content rather than form. The goal is to evaluate what students know and to build on student strengths.

A number of the Bethlehem schools use the Pennsylvania Instructional Support Team model (IST). A specially trained IST teacher works with the classroom teachers to encourage curriculum adaptation and to measure realistic increments of student learning. A key IST teacher provided valuable in-service in curriculum adaptation for ESOL teachers and staff of the elementary and middle schools.

### 3. Technology Use

Technology use was encouraged as a strategy that could introduce, reinforce, and review concepts in content area instruction and in acquisition of English language skills. While specific guidelines were not given, teachers were encouraged to review potentially useful software and determine hardware needs. The district has implemented a technology initiative to improve and expand computer use in the schools. All students have surely benefitted to some degree, but it has been especially helpful for ESOL students who need materials that are interactive, motivational, and provide non-judgmental evaluation and feedback. Software designed for early literacy such as the Apple Early Learning package includes many useful software programs. One of the elementary schools with 38% limited-English students is a pilot site for this program. Students attending ESOL classes write their own stories on the computer, hear the computer reading these stories back, and use graphics to enhance their compositions. They also read "living books" on screen, some of which are programmed so the student may highlight an unknown word and hear it read in English or explained in Spanish.

## GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO THE ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

Teachers from the former bilingual education program were a valuable resource and vital to the success of the new program. Many were assigned as teachers of ESOL (the state of Pennsylvania does not have specific ESOL certification), sometimes in schools which had not previously been staffed with bilingual teachers. Others were assigned as regular classroom teachers, adding a bilingual and bicultural element to the monolingual staff, and greatly facilitating communication with Spanish-speaking parents.

A literature-based reading program, initiated at the same time that LEP students were reassigned to their neighborhood schools, avoided the use of traditional "high, middle, and low" reading groups, which could have resulted in placing all the limited-English students in one reading group. The reading textbook contains authentic children's literature selections, grouped by themes. Books that are rich in vivid characters and content provide many opportunities for writing and energetic discussion. Thus English language instruction is organized around children's literature, content area subjects, and thematically integrated units of learning, avoiding instruction of isolated skills. This approach to educating language minority students has been outlined in detail in Yvonne and David Freeman's (1992) book, *Whole Language for Second Language Learners.*

New material is introduced to the LEP students by the ESOL teachers through a variety of strategies, prior to its introduction in the regular classroom. These language-rich, content-rich, ESOL lessons prepare the students to participate in the regular classroom activities with their English-speaking classmates, once they have learned the appropriate background information and skills. ESOL teachers also follow up with a variety of other activities designed to clarify and reinforce the concepts presented in the reading series. Visitors to these stimulating classrooms are startled to see second grade students fully engaged in reading and writing in English. These same students often speak Spanish to each other and Spanish is generally the preferred language in their homes.

Important to students' academic progress is the teaching of English language skills --listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing--with an integrated approach. Although some researchers (e.g., Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 1985) warn that students need first to learn to speak and understand the language before being taught to read and write in it, abundant experience in Bethlehem and elsewhere demonstrates that each skill reinforces the others when they are used concurrently. When the content of ESOL classes is related to the subject matter taught in the regular classroom, students have the benefit and advantage of "comprehensible input," and these communicative activities become the vehicle for the successful acquisition of English (Krashen & Terrell, 1986).

Close collaboration between regular teachers and teachers of English is more difficult in the ten low impact elementary schools, where two itinerant ESOL teachers see students only two or three times a week. Itinerant ESOL teachers may meet with 40-45 students a week, seeing them in small groups of 4-5 or individually, based on the school schedule and the needs of the students.

For beginner level students in low impact schools, principals can request a "second language guide," a teacher-assistant working under the supervision of the ESOL teacher and classroom teacher. If possible, the second language guide speaks the home language of the student(s). Instructions and written materials for activities in the classroom are always in English, but the second language guide provides concept clarification as needed in the home language. Most beginner level students at low impact schools receive one hour daily of individualized instruction from the second language guide as well as instruction from the ESOL teacher.

## GUIDELINES FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

At the middle school level the ESOL teachers, who are bilingual in English and Spanish, team teach with a certified language arts teacher for English and reading instruction. A class of sixth grade beginners might read stories like *The Drinking Gourd* (Winter, 1987) or *Wagon Wheels* (Benner, 1978), learning vocabulary and spending time discussing the meaning and historical events related to the stories. They write sentences, paragraphs and stories which are often entered into the computer. Discussions, debates, oral reports, drama, and choral reading are encouraged. Students also write in a personal journal for five minutes each day and the ESOL teacher responds personally to each student in writing. These activities provide meaningful integration of content, life experiences, and second language development for the students.

Important to the middle school program was the ESL textbook adoption process which began just as the new program was starting. Because beginner level ESOL students were bused to one middle school, and intermediate and advanced level students remained in their neighborhood schools, a range of text book materials were needed across proficiency levels suitable for sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Teachers consulted with a middle school ESOL consultant from the Fairfax County School District who recommended the selection of interactive materials containing high quality literature. In a series of meetings over a three-month period, a committee of teachers agreed on the texts to be adopted.

## GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO THE HIGH SCHOOL

The high school ESOL team is led by an experienced teacher who is continually engaged in refining and improving the program. For example, during the fall of 1995, advanced level LEP students are offered an experimental program--enrollment in regular ninth grade English, math, science and social studies courses, plus two extra periods for ESOL support and reading in the content areas.

Important to the high school assessment of LEP student progress, is the practice of gathering information in student portfolios for review by the staff. This allows teachers to judge and compare student readiness to enroll in more mainstream classes. Teachers meet to define expectations and to decide which students will take group tests and which students will continue to need individual monitoring. Language proficiency level determines the courses scheduled for a student and the amount of time profitably spent in regular classes. Ultimately, work samples and data in the portfolios are sent to the Center for Language Assessment for review by the Program Coordinator.

The high school ESOL staff also undertook a textbook adoption, after piloting some texts, and final selections were made in the spring of 1994. A strong recommendation for books students could take home was one of the adoption criteria while the overuse of workbooks was strongly discouraged.

All students in the program at Liberty High School use the technology-based Resource Room set up with computers and a variety of appropriate software. A year of preparation was needed to familiarize staff with the technology and teachers were allowed to take computers home over the summer of 1995 to develop strategies for using the software to the fullest advantage of the ESOL students.

The high school is developing a mentoring model, still in the planning stages, which will employ both student and adult mentors.

## PROGRAM CHANGES DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS

### 1. Middle Schools

Three changes were made in the middle school program after the first year. Beginner level LEP students who showed progress at the end of fifth grade were offered the opportunity to enroll in their neighborhood middle school instead of being transported to another school for special, self-contained classes, thus reducing the number of students to be bused. The category "low-schooled," described previously in this article, was dropped at the recommendation of building administrators, with students in this category now placed in beginner level classes in the middle schools. In cases where these students are unable to adjust to school norms of behavior, an alternative placement is made.

One additional modification was the establishment at one middle school of a requirement that certain limited-English students attend the extra period provided at the end of the school day--an extended day program. This session includes supervision of homework completion and notebook requirements, providing more structure for students who are at risk of failing.

### 2. Staff Development

In-service training during the first year of the new program was intense. Regular meetings were held to discuss concerns and develop a common understanding of goals, procedures, and strategies for instruction by all regular classroom teachers working with language minority students. Monthly meetings were held with the elementary school ESOL teachers during the first year, and quarterly during the second year. Secondary school teachers met for the purpose of text adoption and also to discuss the evaluation procedures and to learn successful teaching strategies.

The most successful staff development option was a 15-hour series of after-school sessions led by master ESL teachers which provided one graduate credit for participants. The first year one fifteen hour session was offered; the second year four different sessions were provided, of which two were sessions in the use of computer technology with students learning English.

### 3. Other Changes

Parent understanding of district goals for limited-English students is important to the success of any program, especially one that is taking a radically new departure. In November, 1994 and March, 1995, a newsletter was published to explain the program to parents, and to highlight staff and student accomplishments.

Funds are now allocated for a four-week summer program in ESOL for beginner level students. The addition of this component to the regular school year program provides extra learning time and, more importantly, the maintenance and strengthening of English language skills over the summer.

The Bethlehem district funds a full-time, bilingual secretary to manage the Center for Language Assessment office, a vital link to parents and community members. The bilingual secretary also organizes in-take services and retesting, collects student data, and brings parental concerns to the attention of the English Acquisition Program Coordinator.

The Program Coordinator is a consistent advocate for the integration of LEP students in regular education, and coordinates planning and in-service between ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers. Liaison between special education services and the English Acquisition Program is essential for the proper referral of students for special help. Every effort is made by the Program Coordinator to avoid the retention of these students in grade or of their placement in special education unless very clear data supports such measures. The over-representation of language minority students in special education programs is a national problem. (Benavides, 1988).

## DESIGN OF FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

### 1. Literature Review

While a considerable literature has been published over the past decade on the variables that result in "effective schools" (Trueba, 1984), there is a minimal amount of useful data available to school administrators and teachers on how to handle a sudden influx of limited-English students. Various studies address the issues to a limited degree. Reulzel & Hollingsworth (1988) maintain that all students must be respected and trusted as competent learners who already know a great deal prior to any formal teaching, and that any program for language minority students must be relevant, functional and meaningful. Benderson (1988) asserts that the underlying cause for the high dropout rate of culturally diverse students was directly related to poor elementary and secondary education, and that for students of Spanish-speaking backgrounds, the problem is primarily a function of socioeconomic status and poor education in the second language.

Gringas & Careager (1989) found evidence that the reason for lower achievement in reading and mathematics for students from language minority families was a lack of competence in English. Scott (1985) states that home language may be a variable in the educational process of the language minority student solely due to the stigma attached to not speaking English. He further stated that if nothing is done to help children to become effective speakers of standard English, these students will be severely limited in their educational achievement.

### 2. Bethlehem's Program Features

Bethlehem's English Acquisition Program contains all of the features identified by Lucas and colleagues (1990) as contributing to the success of language minority students. Staff and administration place value on the students' home languages and cultures. There are high expectations for the academic achievement of limited-English students. Staff development is explicitly designed to help teachers meet the needs of language minority students more effectively. Variations in the implementation of the program are permitted, allowing each school to respond to the specific needs of its own student population. A guidance program includes bilingual counselors that give special attention to limited-English students. Parents of these students are encouraged to become involved in their children's education. Perhaps, most importantly, there is a core of staff members in each school that is strongly committed to the empowerment of language minority students through educational opportunity.

While individual teachers can and do make significant differences in the progress of individual LEP students, it is most likely that consistently superior results occur when programs are carefully developed, refined, and modified through the involvement of all staff members. Program modifications, in Bethlehem, are carried out through the joint efforts of the staff and university evaluators.

The Bethlehem district's strong commitment to quality programming is evident in the fact that they have instituted both formative and summative evaluations of the English Acquisition Program. One of the most significant questions to be asked in evaluating any intervention program is whether the strategies involved are efficient in achieving the goals of the program. Programs for limited-English students have consistently lacked strong summative evaluation components, and almost always fail to include any formative evaluation information as part of the refinement process. Frequently, there is very little descriptive information available on a program, making comparisons among programs largely impossible.

### 3. Bethlehem's Evaluation Design

Trueba (1987) identifies two major theoretical approaches employed in examining the education of language minority students: 1) cultural-ecological approaches examining broad sociological factors; and 2) context-specific approaches relating the design and implementation of teaching and learning activities to achievement. Bethlehem staff, working with university researchers, are using an evaluation design which includes both of these approaches. Longitudinal studies which follow students after high school graduation are virtually non-existent, hence Bethlehem plans to follow the graduates of the English Acquisition Program over an extended period of time. It is only through the collection of this type of data that we can validly study the impact of various program on the lives of language minority students.

Any program serving language minority students is entwined in a web of complex variables including developmental levels related to teaching strategies and learning; learning processes related to language and culture; curriculum issues; and sociopolitical influences. The only means for assuring an understanding of the impact of programs on students is through extensive quantitative and qualitative studies. Thus, the formative evaluation of the English Acquisition Program provides information on the extent to which the program is implemented as designed; the impact of the program on student achievement; the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the perspectives of staff, administration and the evaluation team; and an extensive description of the program from an interdisciplinary perspective.

A formative and summative program evaluation design was developed as an integral part of the Bethlehem Area School District English Acquisition Program by the co-authors of this essay. Data collected in the formative evaluation allows for the discovery and correction of unsatisfactory components of the program and provides a vehicle for systemically surveying staff and parent concerns.

During the first two years of the program, parent and teacher surveys and a qualitative responsive evaluation were primarily focused on developing an ethnography of the program that would then be compared with the description in *A Ticket for Tomorrow*, and to theory and research on language minority education. Two surveys were administered: one which examined staff and administrators' attitudes and perceptions of the English Acquisition program after its first year of operation; and the other which sought information from parents (and guardians) of students in the English Acquisition Program as to their impressions of the program over the same time span. The surveys were both administered in November, 1994.

In addition, an extended study was conducted in April and May of 1995 to determine the extent of divergence from the original plan by the Program Design Team, and to gauge the perceptions of staff and administrators on the staff development that would best support program goals. The results of this qualitative participant observation study as well as preliminary data on student progress in reaching higher English proficiency levels will be discussed in the final section of this article. An extensive report with data specific to individual program sites will be provided to the district at a later date and will include specific recommendations for program improvement.

At this time, a longitudinal summative evaluation of student achievement is projected, including data on participation in high school extra-curricular activities, and post-graduation activities of the students who entered the English Acquisition Program from its onset in September, 1993. The Bethlehem district's data base allows for the maintenance of such a large number of variables on each student but these might be confounding factors in measuring the overall success of the English Acquisition Program.

*Filemaker Pro* (Claris Corporation, 1990) was used to create a relational data base for the English Acquisition Program. Initial registration and testing information on each student is entered into the master file. An individual student "event file" contains information from each first and last quarter evaluation throughout the student's time in the English Acquisition Program. Other data related to student progress such as student withdrawals from and returns to the district, transfers within the district, special education placements, high school activities, course grades, achievement test scores, leadership activities, etc. are also entered in the data base. This data base model is useful for program evaluation as well as for assessment of student performance over a period of years, controlling for a number of variables.

If other districts would adopt a similar evaluation model--regardless of program type--a substantial data base for meta-analysis of findings on language minority education would become available to researchers and educators for planning purposes. One of the serious problems in the development of quality education for language minority students has been the ambiguity of research studies. These inconclusive results are confusing to district administrators, many of whom are not experts in either research design or statistics. Much of the failure in bilingual education research studies rests on the fact that so few studies have applied the fundamentals of reliable education research: random assignment, control groups, and statistical control for variables.

## RESULTS OF INITIAL SURVEYS

An analysis of the information collected in the two surveys administered at the end of the first year of the new program reveals that: 1) the majority of staff and parents have a positive attitude toward the English Acquisition Program and its goals; 2) there is considerable agreement among staff as to which components of the program would benefit from refinement and change; and 3) there is also agreement among teachers as to the most useful focus and structure of future staff development topics. It is important to note that as with all survey data, these findings must be interpreted with caution, due to well-documented validity and reliability problems inherent in survey data (Gronlund, 1976).

The English Acquisition Program Coordinator devised the questions for the two surveys to obtain useful information for program modification and improvement. The surveys were designed to be brief so that respondents could complete them easily and quickly, and would be more likely to return them. The results of the surveys are a fair indicator of the degree to which the program is supported by teachers, administrators and parents; and an efficient way of finding out how the English Acquisition Program should be improved.

### Staff Perceptions of Student Progress

The responses of the teachers and administrators to each of the ten questions on the survey were analyzed separately using descriptive statistics whenever possible, and using narratives when the survey questions did not lend themselves to statistical description. The results of the survey provided the district with the following information as to the perceptions of the professional staff in the district including regular classroom teachers, administrators, specialist teachers and ESOL teachers:

- 39 percent of the professional staff responding to the survey reported that "most" or "all" of the language minority students participating in the program had "made substantial progress toward the goal of acquiring English fluency" during the first year of the program

- 23 percent of the professional staff indicated that they believed that "more than half" of the students in the program were making substantial progress in acquiring fluency in English

- 25 percent of the staff asserted that language minority students were making "some progress" in acquiring English language fluency

- Only 13 percent of the respondents perceived students as making "little" or "no progress" in developing English fluency during the first year of the new program.

The responses to this question indicate that the majority of the professional staff in the district view the English Acquisition Program as successful, even during the first year of its implementation. It would appear that the professional staff of the district has not only accepted the curriculum change for LEP students, but has come to view it as the appropriate approach even though there was initial resistance to the new program by some of the staff prior to its implementation.

Evaluators believe that it will be important to ask this same question of teachers and administrators each year during the program's formative stage to monitor any changes in attitudes. A significant increase or decrease in positive attitudes might be an indicator of the impact of modifications on the program's effectiveness, or of attitude changes as staff gains more experience in working with limited-English students. This information will be useful in monitoring not only attitude change as staff members become more familiar with and thus more comfortable with the program, but can be correlated to program refinement changes to determine if the changes are in fact valid or successful in the staff's perception.

The evaluators also believe, based on well-documented research on the nature of second language acquisition and the learning of school subjects (Ramirez, 1991), that it is not valid to judge the program impact only by achievement scores on annual standardized tests, but that subsequent surveys of staff on this question should be conducted.

The high percentage of positive responses on the items in the staff survey regarding the new program, as well as on the parent questionnaire, must be understood in the context of widely different reactions in the school community when the new initiative was announced (the change from a native language instruction model to an English-language immersion model). The socio-political situation in Bethlehem at the time of the innovation did not favor the "halo effect" that frequently accompanies educational changes. Instead, it was necessary to overcome the negative reaction and publicity that was first associated with the English Acquisition Program.

The present strong staff and parent support for the program after its first year of operation must be credited at least in part to the sensitivity of the district administrators. Involvement of teaching staff in the actual development of the program helped to bring about the cooperation of the majority of staff in carrying it out. In order to gain support of all elements, a conscious effort was made to avoid negative comments about the previous program.

**Time Necessary to Acquire Informal English Skills**

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents to the staff questionnaire indicated that they believe it takes the LEP student between two and three years to become proficient in basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in a second language (Cummins, 1981). Sixteen percent of the staff indicated that they believe it only takes one year for LEP students to become proficient in informal social discourse in English. Together, 83 percent of the teachers and administrators who responded to this question on the survey asserted that language minority children could become proficient in basic social language skills between one and three years after they enter the English Acquisition Program in the district.

It must be recognized that these responses are presently based on staff's observations of student language learning not only during the first year of the English Acquisition Program, but during the years when some of these teachers worked with students in the former Spanish-language instruction program. It is essential that teaching staff be surveyed again in three to four years to determine if their responses to this question have changed significantly.

There was no significant difference in the responses to this item by staff working in low, medium and high impact schools. After the English Acquisition Program has been in operation for several years, teachers may report differently. For example, we may find that language minority students in low impact schools, where a majority of the student body speaks only English, will become fluent in basic social language more rapidly than language minority students in medium or high impact schools. It is also important to point out that the Bethlehem teaching staff are knowledgeable enough about the second language learning process to understand the difference between the language skills necessary for informal communication and those required for cognitive and academic learning. Classroom teachers working with limited-English students often do not have adequate training for teaching LEP students and these teachers are generally unfamiliar with Cummins theory of BICS and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). The fact that all respondents to the survey answered this question indicates that teachers in the Bethlehem district have had significantly more training in the area of second language acquisition and language minority education than is typically found in public school systems.

**Time Needed to Acquire Cognitive/Academic Language**

Eighty-seven percent of the staff responding to the survey stated that it takes three or more years for language minority students "to become sufficiently proficient in the English necessary for academic success," while 47 percent believed that it might take four or more years to achieve this proficiency level in English which, according to Cummins (1981), is a prerequisite for learning in the content areas. Again, it is reasonable to suppose that the respondents are making these assertions based on their earlier experiences in the bilingual program and this does not reflect what the respondents are actually seeing in the new English Acquisition Program.

This question of the rate of second language learning for academic purposes is a contentious one which will be surveyed again in the coming years to gauge differences of opinion. It is important to obtain data on whether the English Acquisition Program itself has an impact upon the rate at which LEP students acquire English language proficiency for social and academic purposes. Staff responses to these two questions, at present, generally support the Cummins hypotheses on learning rate for BICS and CALP.

**Staff Perceptions of Parent Reactions**

Forty-one percent of the teachers and administrators reported that parents of both language minority and language majority children offered neither oral nor written reaction to the new English Acquisition Program; 31 percent said that parental reaction to the program was "mostly positive" or "favorable;" while only 6 percent of the staff saw reactions from parents as "negative."

The responses to this question were interesting when compared to a question in the parent survey in which the majority of parents asserted that they received no information on the English Acquisition Program before or during the 1993-1994 school year. It is possible that some parents may not have been aware of changes taking place in the bilingual program which would explain their lack of commentary. It may also be hypothesized that some of the language minority parents did not have the literacy skills necessary to comprehend materials sent home or information reported by the media.

### Staff Perceptions of Curriculum Adaptation

Staff was also surveyed as to its perceptions of the degree to which regular classroom teachers adapted curriculum to meet the needs of the limited-English students, an acknowledged priority of the program administrators. The question posed was, "How often and how well is this being done?" Sixty-nine percent of the survey respondents answered that curriculum was "often" adapted to meet the needs of the language minority students; 24 percent asserted that this took place "regularly," and 17 percent said that adaptation took place "always." Allowing for differences in individual teacher's operational definitions of each of these terms, it is clear that teachers do recognize the need to adapt curriculum to improve the learning opportunities of language minority students.

However, the question of the strategies most useful for making this adaptation is a topic that needs to be investigated in order that the district may eventually correlate student achievement with specific strategies, techniques and /or materials employed by classroom teachers, and so that teachers may be subsequently trained on the value and use of these specific strategies. Such data will be of high value to practitioners in other districts as well.

It is interesting to note that regular classroom teachers' and ESOL teachers' responses to the question of curriculum adaptation were significantly different and that the responses of regular classroom teachers and ESOL teachers from high vs. medium and low impact schools also differed. ESOL teachers did not see the necessary curriculum adaptations being made as frequently as the classroom teachers believed it to be occurring; and both teaching staff in regular classrooms and ESOL teachers at high impact schools reported a greater amount of curriculum adaptation than those at low and medium impact schools.

Moreover, ESOL teachers at low and medium impact schools did not feel that there was always an appropriate amount of curriculum adaptation occurring in the regular classrooms. Many ESOL teachers made comments to this effect in the narrative response questions in the survey. Respondents from high impact schools were twice as likely to describe curriculum adaptation as occurring "often," "regularly," or "always" as respondents from the low or medium impact schools. This variable of curriculum adaptation warrants careful study in order to determine what types of curriculum adaptation are most useful for facilitating the English acquisition and academic success of language minority students. This is an example of an instance in which formative data analysis has lead to the development of a quasi-experimental design study, allowing for the identification of instructional strategies affecting student achievement and self-esteem.

The recent adoption of a literature-based reading program in place of traditional basal readers in the elementary school should facilitate the elementary level teachers' efforts to adapt curriculum, and, at the same time, provide data about effective strategies.

The Bethlehem district and other districts with LEP students would also benefit from a determination of the types of curriculum adaptation that are most effective at different levels of English proficiency. That is, it would be useful to know if a particular strategy is generally effective at one fluency level, for example the intermediate level, but of very little use at the advanced level.

Curriculum adaptation also needs to be studied in relation to its impact on different types of classroom structures such as the self-contained classrooms in elementary school vs. the departmentalized model of the middle school, or the teacher-centered vs. the child-centered classroom. Finally, it must be noted that even in a classroom made up entirely of English speakers, there is still a need for making curriculum adaptations based on individual students' learning styles, personal interests, prior academic successes or failures. This question should be posed in subsequent surveys when the teachers have become more accustomed to the English Acquisition Program and the new reading/language arts program. Any other new program adopted in the district such as "developmentally appropriate practices" (Bredekemp, 1987) will have an impact on the way in which curriculum adaptation is carried out in different schools.

**Staff Responses to Open-ended Questions**

Several open-ended questions were also posed in the survey and resulted in interesting and useful information that became part of the focus of the participant observational data collection conducted in spring, 1995. The open-ended questions elicited multiple responses; that is, an overwhelming majority (99%) of the respondents gave more than one answer to each question. Some clear generalizations were represented among the responses which are here outlined:

1. Eighty-five percent of the respondents noted that the ESOL teachers themselves are of paramount importance to the success of the English Acquisition Program. Many respondents specifically cited the high degree of collaboration between ESOL and classroom teachers as the reason for the progress made in successfully implementing this program.

2. Teachers repeatedly noted (30%) that cooperation among student peers in the form of the "buddy" system, cooperative learning groups, and paired reading also contributed to the progress that had been made in English language learning.

3. Approximately 50% of the staff made reference to the degree to which curriculum flexibility is permitted as a factor in the success of the program. From the unstructured narrative response format of the survey, it was impossible to determine if this "flexibility" referred to the ability to individualize curriculum, or that teachers in the English Acquisition Program tend to be more flexible. Subsequent interviews with staff in May and June, 1995, clarified the responses to mean that the staff's freedom to make changes necessary to their specific classroom situation was a crucial factor contributing to the success of students in the program.

4. Approximately 20% of the respondents to the survey credited the support of administrators as contributing to the progress made by students during the first year of the new program.

5. While 10% of the staff asserted that in-service training was a factor that contributed to the program's success, "lack of in-service training" was listed as a program weakness by 20% of the respondents. This response pattern may indicate that the staff training conducted prior to the start of the new program was relevant and useful, but that as teachers become more aware of student needs, they detected gaps in their own training.

Perhaps the training program should become multidimensional. It appears that as teachers discover their need for specific types of information on how second language learning occurs, on how to make curriculum adaptations, and on classroom strategies suitable for different age levels, they become convinced of the need for additional training on topics quite different from what had been planned. Clearly, experienced teachers have a more sophisticated understanding of the variables that have an impact on the learning of ESL students and, therefore, are more likely to seek out additional training opportunities.

It is recommended that future staff development workshops be focused on the specific problems and needs outlined by regular classroom teachers and ESOL teachers themselves. Additionally, a minimum level of training should be mandatory for all Bethlehem district personnel including such topics as second language acquisition theory, curriculum adaptation, and cultural sensitivity, and this training should be ongoing.

Later interviews with teachers revealed another concern: while the in-service training was valued, there was no chance for teachers to discuss with their workshop leaders what actually happened in their classrooms when they applied their new strategies. It may be necessary to build in some follow-up time in the next round of training sessions.

6. Parent involvement and parent education was viewed as very important to student progress by Bethlehem staff.

In many of the low-impact and medium impact schools the lack of such parental involvement was considered an impediment to student success during the first year of the program. Teachers at high impact schools felt that parent involvement was greater than did the staff at the low impact and medium impact schools. Closer analysis through ethnographic interviewing of staff indicated that at the neighborhood schools which served a large Latino population and where Spanish had been the primary language of instruction, the parent participation contributed positively to students' progress.

In some of the medium impact and low impact schools, staff felt a need for greater parental involvement. It would be useful to find out what is inhibiting parent involvement in these buildings, and to devise appropriate plans to encourage more involvement at each home school. Administrators should also determine if the language minority students' parents fail to become actively involved in the community school due to a lack of fluency in English and to decide if the availability of translators would result in increased participation by these parents. Providing transportation might increase the likelihood of parents attending daytime or evening activities at the school. The home-school connection has been highly encouraged by all the Bethlehem schools in the past, and the demonstration of respect for the home language and culture has always been, and continues to be, a strong point of the district's program. There also has been a concerted effort to hire teachers and staff who can communicate with parents in Spanish. It was impossible to determine from the survey responses if the complaints about the lack of parent involvement were directed at ethnic groups other than the Latino parents, but this possibility will also need to be examined.

7. Many respondents to the staff survey made comments about the advantages of heterogeneous grouping, the use of a literature-based approach, and students attending school in their own neighborhood as positive steps.

There seemed to be some confusion among staff as to the differences between literature-based programs and whole language programs. Later observations indicated that the majority of teachers are using the literature-based approach, but not an integrated curriculum, while there was evidence of whole language use by many of the elementary teachers.

It is very likely that students studying and playing together after school, as a direct consequence of their attending their neighborhood schools, will find greater opportunities for social interactions in English and this interaction, therefore, will encourage the integration of the language minority student into the English-speaking peer groups. The LEP child enrolled in the English Acquisition Program thus has the opportunity for daily communication experiences in English both in the contextually-bound language of play, and the less contextually- bound language of the classroom.

A high level of agreement among staff on the problems that need to be addressed in order for the English Acquisition Program to function effectively. Class size was indicated by over 50 percent of the respondents as a problem in spite of the class reductions provided in the original district plan. However, it is important to note that in most surveys of teachers, class size is viewed as a significant factor in their degree of satisfaction with their work; thus, it is unlikely that this response is solely due to the implementation of the English Acquisition Program. Both ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers overwhelmingly viewed class size as the most pressing problem facing the program. This is not a problem unique to districts in which there are large numbers of ESOL students, but a general concern in the field of education across grade levels and geographic areas. Since class size in the Bethlehem schools is within the average range nationally, this problem is not a particular concern of the English Acquisition Program but of the school district at large.

Other problems raised by a number of teachers responding to the survey included: distinguishing between learning disabilities and second language learning; the problem of some LEP students who can read aloud in English but have difficulty comprehending what they have read; the problem of providing adequate education for transient children; the classroom disruptions due to children entering the program at all times of the year; the lack of student motivation; and the problem of ESOL teachers and classroom teachers not having sufficient time to work collaboratively at low impact schools. Only three of the respondents felt that learning the second language and content at the same time was far too much to expect from the students.

Some of these issues might best be addressed informally at the building level or at staff meetings at either the building or district level. In the case of issues that cannot be easily resolved such as student motivation, student assessment, or curriculum adaptation strategies, a task committee could be formed to investigate specific concerns and issues related to each problem. It is frequently impossible to isolate variables that affect the learning environment in general from conditions that have an impact only on language minority students.

One way of helping teachers who face the challenge of teaching both at-risk children and young people whose knowledge of English is limited might be the organization of a "Supportive Learning Group," through which university personnel would train resident "experts" in each building in the district. Those teachers designated resident "experts" would meet regularly to discuss concerns and problems and to share strategies and successes. Teacher "experts" could call on the support of the university for suggestions on alternative strategies, to observe classrooms, and even to model teaching techniques.

Surprisingly, there was little agreement among teachers as to which strategies help students learn English, with two notable exceptions. Over 50 percent of the teacher respondents asserted that the buddy system of peer tutoring was helpful. Other strategies and methodologies cited in order of their frequency included: putting up labels in English in the classroom, teacher modeling, use of visuals, concrete hands-on experiences; repetition, predictable stories, the new reading program; cooperative learning groups; the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach; pre-reading lessons by ESOL teachers; accommodating different learning styles; demonstrating respect for home language and cultures; teaching assistants helping groups of beginners in English; show and tell methods, individual help, curriculum adaptation, and command/request drill. Art oriented activities, vocabulary development, a safe environment for risk taking in the language classroom, oral reading in teams, parent involvement, body language, rainbow words, and sentence strips were all cited by two or more respondents.

Subsequent qualitative observations indicated that the teachers were in fact using all of these strategies to different degrees, but that many techniques were being ignored by teachers who responded to this survey item. This was an indication that perhaps teachers have not yet acquired metacognitive knowledge of what works best with language minority students.

In like manner, participant observation indicated that there is great variability in teaching strategies and techniques employed by the district's classroom and ESOL teachers. Making teachers aware of strategies that have been demonstrated to work, and the appropriate ways and times to use such strategies would be an important addition to staff training and to the literature on education of language minority students in general. The authors of this article plan to develop and validate an instrument to identify teaching strategies, and also design a study to gather data on these variables. It may be appropriate to train teachers in the use of action research to determine which strategies are most effective with their particular students.

It was interesting that curriculum adaptation was not listed more frequently as a strategy for improving students acquisition of English when considerable attention and emphasis has been placed on this strategy in staff development training and in the criteria for program success. Later observations in numerous classrooms supported the contention that this very important strategy is not yet fully understood by all staff working with LEP students in the district and that there is great variability among teachers as to the degree to which curriculum adaptation occurs and the specific strategies employed. It was evident after observations of classrooms were conducted that different philosophies of education have a strong impact on the particular strategies emphasized, and that teachers differ widely in their commitment to a child-centered curriculum philosophy (Cuban, 1993).

When teachers were asked what they personally learned about the language acquisition process during the first year of the implementation of the English Acquisition Program, responses were largely personal and were seldom corroborated by the responses of colleagues. Most teachers who had not previously worked with LEP students in the regular classroom found the new program a challenging but extremely rewarding professional endeavor. Since many staff members chose not to respond to this item and since responses were "personal" opinions and quite varied, generalizations are not possible.

### Parent Responses to Survey

The responses of the parents of students in the English Acquisition program were analyzed using descriptive statistics whenever possible and by using narrative analysis in the remainder of the questions. The first two questions requested demographic data including the school that the child attends and the child's grade level. A total of 276 responses were analyzed. Two of the response sheets were unintelligible and not included in the analysis. Parents or guardians of every student enrolled in the English Acquisition Program received the survey along with a letter explaining its purpose. Directions for completing and returning the survey in both English and Spanish were included, and parents were encouraged to respond in either language.

Pre-addressed, stamped envelopes were included with the surveys and letters to encourage responses. Low levels of literacy among the parents resulted in a misunderstanding of some of the questions. The questions were developed by the district with the purpose of gaining specific information of interest in the formative stages of program refinement.

Eighty-one percent of the parent or guardian respondents indicated that they felt their child "progressed well academically" during the first year of the English Acquisition Program, while 7 percent of the parents responded that their child "did not make good progress" during the 1993-1994 school year. The remaining 12 percent of the parents or guardians did not respond at all to this question. Of this twelve percent, 10 percent had children who had been in kindergarten the previous year, or noted that they could not respond because their child attended another school district during the 1993-1994 school year. These parent results were extremely positive, considering the controversy initially associated with the program change.

Only 14 percent of the parents or guardians responded that their child had been absent more than 10 days during the 1993-1994 school year, while 71 percent responded that their child had not been absent 10 or more days, and 15 percent did not respond.

### Parents' Perceptions of How Their Children Learn English

On a restricted choice item, 98 percent of the respondents recognized that English acquisition was developed through their child's participation in a variety of academic and social experiences in school. Sixty-eight percent of the parents or guardians responding to the survey indicated that lessons by their child's ESOL teacher "most helped" their child learn English; 67 percent said that a teacher who talked with students and encouraged them helped their child's learning of English. Fifty-six percent of the respondents asserted that providing children with the opportunity to take books home to read contributed to their gains in English language fluency, while 51 percent indicated that reading from books in English in school was a contributing factor in the child's learning of the English language. Twenty-two percent felt that their child's speaking with English-speaking peers helped him or her learn the language. Only two parents checked the item "none of these."

### Parent Evaluation of the English Acquisition Program

Eighty-two percent of the respondents viewed the Bethlehem Area School District English Acquisition Program as "good" or "very good." This is an unusually high positive percentage rate for a survey by any standard and becomes even more impressive when considered in light of the negative climate that immediately preceded the adoption of the program. The writers believe that the teachers and administrators are to be commended for the time and effort spent on the introduction of the program to parents and guardians.

Twelve percent of the respondents found the program either "adequate" or "satisfactory," only 1 percent of the respondents considered the program "poor," and five percent did not respond to this item.

### Parent Reports on Children's Problems at School

Twenty-three percent of the respondents indicated that their child had difficulties in school during the 1993-1994 term, chiefly identifying two categories: behavioral problems (11%) and academic problems (12%). The behavior problems were largely reported by parents of students in the middle school or high school (93%). Academic problems outlined by parents appeared to be centered on reading difficulties when they so specified, but in most cases they did not give this information so that generalizations could not be made.

Unfortunately, parents were not asked how they became aware of their children's difficulties (e.g., child told parents, parent observations, teacher told parents). In future, account will be taken of the types and frequency of difficulties experienced by LEP students who are in, or have exited from, the English Acquisition Program. Such data will give teachers and administrators more realistic expectations for student behavior and achievement.

Surprisingly, 85 percent of the parents and guardians indicated that they had received no information on the new program during its first year of operation, 13 percent said they had received "some" information on the program, and 2 percent did not respond to the item. It will be necessary to produce an information packet that can be routinely distributed to parents or guardians at the time of enrollment, clearly delineating the goals and nature of the English Acquisition Program. This proposed program guide should be available not only in English and Spanish, but also translated into the major languages of the students in the district. The Bethlehem Area School District has consistently made efforts to maintain strong parent-school communication and involvement and it certainly remains one of the objectives of the English Acquisition Program. The district needs to find out why so few parents and guardians acknowledged the receipt of information on the program.

The potential of a "Home Language and Culture Resource Center" which would keep track of translators for a variety of languages and information on cultural and religious diversity norms would be an extremely important resource for teachers and administrators alike. For example, in working with a school district in Philadelphia which has a largely Asian population, a student teacher found that memos or letters sent home to parents in general seldom were responded to, but that letters addressed by name to the male head of the household were always responded to with courtesy (personal communication, February, 1995).

### Parents' School Visits

Eighty-one percent of the parents indicated that they had visited their child's school during the first year of the new program. This may explain the response to the previous question, as parents may have learned of the new program during school visits and at open house meetings scheduled early in the school year, and thus "received" no printed information on the English Acquisition Program. This high rate of visitation is commendable because many of the language minority parents do not have personal transportation available and must therefore make special arrangements.

Fifty-three percent of the parents responded that they had attended a conference with their child's teacher during the 1993-1994 school year, 25 percent responded "no" and 12 percent failed to respond to the question. There was a strong correlation between the grade level of student and parental attendance, with parents of younger elementary students attending conferences more frequently than parents of children in other grades, a characteristic pattern of parents in general.

Eighty-six percent of the respondents replied that they would like to receive a regular newsletter about the English Acquisition Program; 4 percent answered "no" to this item and 10 percent did not respond to it. Twenty-eight percent of the parents who responded that they would like to receive a newsletter added "en español" (in Spanish) after their responses. This newsletter was published in the 1994-1995 school year in English and Spanish.

There was general consensus in the response to the question "What can we do to improve the English Acquisition Program?" that improvements should focus on providing more and better opportunities for promoting the students' learning of English, including "after school tutoring," "a summer program," and "more homework." Other suggestions offered by five or more respondents included "providing English classes for parents," and "sending home more information to parents."

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

Analyses of the data provided from these surveys show strong support for the English Acquisition Program by a majority of teachers, administrators, and parents in the district. Refinement of the program's implementation through the use of formative evaluation analyses should serve to increase this support, as both staff and parents will be consistently asked to express concerns and to suggest program improvements.

One of the most important uses of the data from the teachers' and administrators' responses to the survey is the valuable information for planning staff development. It was evident from the responses of teachers that they see the need for on-going professional development as they come to recognize the complexity of educating language minority students in mainstream classrooms. Research has previously indicated that even experienced, expert classroom teachers may not necessarily be effective with ESOL students (Enright, 1986; Lucas, Heinze & Donato, 1990). It appears that the traditional "one-shot" workshop may address some issues in the education of language minority students but does not provide sufficient modeling and follow-up to give teachers the skills and confidence to try new strategies.

Many new elements have an impact on the effective planning and delivery of instruction for language minority students (e.g., understanding first and second language development; changing beliefs, attitudes, and values toward language minority students; complexities of academic and social integration of language minority students into mainstream settings, etc.). A series of workshops should be planned which begin with a general survey of linguistic principles and of second language acquisition, followed by sessions on specific strategies for teaching both subject matter content and English language. This progression from theory to practical application would provide a schema enabling teachers to become more reflective practitioners and problem solvers.

Parents of language minority students, while generally satisfied with the program, displayed a new self-confidence in their relations with the schools by their willingness to ask for additional services for their children. Parents are requesting additional tutoring, English classes for parents, newsletters in Spanish, and generally express the desire to fully participate in their children's education. The Bethlehem district, historically, has encouraged parent involvement, knowing that the positive effects of the relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement are well documented (e.g., Bermudez & Padron, 1987; Epstein, 1990). School districts can no longer assume that all parents understand district or school building expectations for parent participation. Immigrant parents may not have an understanding of the value of parent involvement (Ogbu, 1990). Cultural attitudes on such issues as discipline in the schools, homework, parent visits to schools vary greatly among ethnic groups and may not reflect a lack of parental interest in school affairs but a genuine need for parents of language minority children to be "educated" to the expectations of U.S. schools.

A proactive, multi-level approach such as that of Faltis (1993) which was based on the works of Pettit (1980) and Rasinski and Fredericks (1989) would be a valuable investment of time and resources for any district implementing an English Acquisition Program. Some of the Bethlehem teachers who are new to this population need to learn more about the parents' communities, their support systems, and the stress factors that have an impact on the lives of families living in a new country or community. Informal gatherings or small group meetings in the school or in community centers might be more welcoming than the traditional PTA meeting, for example, which can be intimidating for a parent who speaks little or no English and has not yet made friends in the local area. Teacher contacts with families should occur early in the school year and it would to be worthwhile knowing the cultural protocols of the community if a positive relationship is to be established with parents or guardians. Training in cultural sensitivity will help and having access to translators is essential.

The second level of interaction proposed by Faltis (1993) involves keeping parents informed by telephone calls or written communication, or informal conferences, on a variety of topics such as basic school policies, the English Acquisition Program goals and practices, upcoming school events, the child's progress, and numerous other topics that parents are typically interested in. Whenever possible, this information should be given in the home language by native speakers. The quarterly newsletter established by the English Acquisition Program Office is an excellent example of this type of communication. In addition, some of the schools also have their own newsletters that are translated into Spanish and sent home. Personal notes from teachers are also well-received by parents in the district.

Hakuta (1990) demonstrated that students in the third grade and higher are very capable of translating from their native language to English and vice versa. The focus of this second level of involving the students' parents should be to broaden the base of communication (Faltis, 1993). As soon as parents respond to school communications, they should be invited to participate in classroom and school-related activities, a third level of parent involvement. Faltis (1990) believes that the activities parents learn about in the classroom can be transferred to helping their children with school tasks at home. If lack of transportation hinders parent participation, a parent committee could be developed in each building to resolve the problem.

Finally, at level four, parents are encouraged to become active decision makers in the school. Rasinski and Fredericks (1989) call this level the "empowerment" level. While few parents may actually attain this level, those who do have the potential for becoming community representatives who can provide advice and support in dealing with other parents. A family literacy center is already an integral part of the district's services, as are GED (high school equivalency) programs in both English and Spanish. The university evaluators believe that increasing parent involvement in the schools will increase the use of these services by the parents.

## ON-SITE PROGRAM EVALUATION

Formative evaluation refers to the process of continually assessing, reviewing and modifying a program as it develops. Information gathered in this way allows continuous program improvement.

To obtain specific information about the implementation, impact, strengths and weaknesses of the English Acquisition Program after almost two years of operation, a qualitative evaluation was conducted by co-authors Simons-Turner and Connelly. Since the area of expertise of the one is linguistics and that of the other is education, the advantage of interdisciplinary perspectives in data interpretation afforded additional validity to the recommendations for program modification. Concomitant with the main goal of providing a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the program as implemented, as well as recommendations for program refinement, the evaluators had a secondary goal of coordinating the data collected from the Bethlehem schools with data from models in two other districts to build a grounded theory of models of education designed to foster the development of fluency in English.

A "structured immersion" or "English Acquisition" model differs from school district to school district, and yet little attempt has been made to document specifically what such programs have in common and how they may differ. It is difficult to analyze what strategies and program models are most effective without accurate and detailed description that allows statistical results to be compared in a systematic manner. Such a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) will provide important premises from which school districts that are facing the challenge of developing quality programs for language minority students may build their specially tailored models.

Grounded theory will also provide a foundation for quantitative research studies of the variables that have an impact on the successful implementation of such programs and this, in turn, will provide direction for future research. Interviews with teachers and administrators, participant observation, traditional observation and examination of documents outlining program goals and guidelines were employed in this evaluation to determine if the program is following the original plans of the design team and to make recommendations for improvements.

## Procedures

Initial interviews were unstructured, and focused on gaining the informants' views of the program in general, its relative merits; informants' recommendations for changes in the program's design and implementation; and informants' perspectives on strategies that would facilitate students' learning of English and content area studies. Field notes from these initial interviews were coded openly, without theoretical control, through a "constant comparative" method of analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, 101-115) to build a holistic description of the English Acquisition Program from the perspective of its staff, and to allow for maximum variation in data.

During the first stages of analysis each interview or observation was coded into tentative conceptual categories. Tentative categories of strengths and weaknesses were identified which were theoretically sampled (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in the interviews of later informants. As expected, several categories which surfaced during the first phase of data collection were not supported through analyses of subsequent cycles of interviews and observations. For example, a category of "curriculum integration" emerged early in the evaluation process and remained an important consideration across interviews and observations in several elementary schools. However, observations and interviews in other elementary, middle and secondary schools revealed a great degree of variability from "complete integration" to "no integration" as to how this construct was operationalized in a particular classroom.

Review of interview notes, observation notes and program documents followed each encounter in the school settings. This cycle of data collection-coding elucidated critical connections between categories which emerged simultaneously. For example, important connections were established between curriculum integration, curriculum adaptation, and teaching strategies. Curriculum adaptation appeared to be related to teachers' knowledge of strategies to present content materials in multiple modalities. Curriculum integration appeared to facilitate curriculum adaptation; that is, curriculum adaptation was more readily observable in classrooms of teachers who used more integration of curriculum. At the same time, teachers who used integration of curriculum were more likely to adapt curriculum. Further analyses indicated that teachers in low and medium impact schools do more curriculum adaptation because they have fewer opportunities to collaborate with ESOL specialists.

Categories emerging from the data were noted and school similarities and differences in perceptions and behaviors indicated the interrelationships of categories. As the alternating coding, categorization, and data gathering continued, exploration of interrelationships and delimitation of properties of categories of program strengths and weaknesses continued.

Throughout the evaluation process, some of the criteria used for assessing the validity of the data included: 1) solicited or unsolicited; 2) subject or not subject to evaluator influence; 3) directly stated or observed, or inferred; and 3) corroborated or not corroborated by subsequent observation or interviews.

Extensive traditional observations and participant-observations in the elementary, middle, and high school were made over a two month period in a representative sample of ESOL classrooms and regular classrooms. Because of the qualitative and formative intent of the evaluation, the two evaluators decided against using preconstructed observation instruments which might result in data that was too narrowly circumscribed to be representative of the whole program, but to make unstructured, detailed field notes as they observed. This approach had the advantage of appearing to be less evaluative and thus less threatening to individual teachers. Evaluators took great care to assure teachers that the program was being described and evaluated, not the teachers as individual professionals, and that their opinions are of paramount importance.

The majority of observations were conducted jointly to control for reliability and facilitate interdisciplinary analyses (80%). Unique and common teaching behaviors and student behaviors were noted, as were continuities and discontinuities among specific groups such as elementary, middle school and secondary settings; impact levels of schools, and students' levels of English proficiency.

Once major categories and themes had emerged and their properties were described, more abstract theoretical connections between and among categories were made. Theoretical sampling that proceeded around these emergent themes and related categories appeared to explain major processes related to program effectiveness and ineffectiveness. Data collection continued to the point at which all major categories were saturated (i.e., no new categories or properties of categories were forthcoming as a result of additional data collection). Also, all categories were corroborated by data obtained in an alternative fashion (i.e, interview, observation, survey).

Although data collection, coding and analysis led to an integrated, detailed set of variables and hypotheses about the English Acquisition Program, professional literature was consulted for models and paradigms to support the data. Besides specific information about the program, the observations and interviews have yielded a rich description which will be combined with data collected in two other Pennsylvania districts--Allentown and Reading--in a future study detailing the emergence of a grounded theory of characteristics necessary for quality programs for limited-English students.

## General On-Site Observations

One of the strengths of the English Acquisition Program is the manner in which the English language instruction has become a part of the school curriculum, giving students grade appropriate content and the English fluency necessary to become independent learners. The program was designed to supplement the regular district-wide curriculum, and every effort is made not to "water down" the content of the learning provided to LEP students. Teachers are afforded great flexibility in meeting the needs of their individual classrooms and individual students.

Across all grade levels from first through twelve, there is great variability among teachers as to the degree to which they actually adapt curriculum. It appears that while many teachers employ a range of readily recognizable ESOL techniques, whole language strategies, and more traditional strategies for content area instruction, others seem to struggle with the new approaches and resort to repetitive drills not related to content instruction. Evaluators found that ESOL teachers were consistently more adept at the task of adapting curriculum and preparing students for content learning. Elementary level regular classroom teachers for the most part were also competent in adapting curriculum. As might be expected, some teachers in the medium and low impact schools who are relatively new to working with limited-English student need more training on how to adapt curriculum for their students. There was greater variability among middle and high school teachers in handling the integration of curriculum.

While teachers' responses to the survey question on teaching strategies were extremely limited in scope, the evaluators, through observations and interviews, obtained a clearer picture of which strategies are most supportive of English-language learners. They were organized into the following conceptual categories:

1. teaching to students' prior experiences

2. providing strong academic content, relevant to students' backgrounds; using through exploration and hands-on methods

3. simultaneously emphasizing the four modalities of literacy in all content areas--listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing

4. validating students' personal experiences and culture, including their language, literature and art forms

5. using student-centered strategies

6. using strategies in which students engage in interactive techniques such as cooperative learning, pair work

7. modeling and providing activities that proceed from the concrete to the abstract

8. abundantly using supplementary materials made by teacher and students

9. using visuals and emphasizing concept development through graphic organizers, semantic maps

10. curriculum integration

11. curriculum adaptation.

These categorical concepts are supported by various research studies (Cummins, 1989; Laboo & Teale, 1990; Olson, 1988; Olson & Mullen, 1990; Urzua, 1990).

There was also great variability among teachers in taking advantage of curriculum integration. The use of integrated thematic units across content areas is especially effective in providing students with connections between existing schema and new knowledge. While the district has recently adopted literature-based anthologies for its reading and language arts curriculum, the degree to which teachers integrate literature with the other content areas such as social studies and science ranges from moderate to no use of integration . At the middle and high school levels, curriculum integration could measurably improve students' ability to deal successfully with content while acquiring English.

## New Directions

In the 1995-1996 school year, one of the high impact elementary schools and one of the middle schools will pilot an integrated curriculum, and the evaluators expect to monitor student performance and teacher reactions at these sites to determine the immediate and long-range impact on the students' content and language learning. Classroom-by-classroom flexibility in program implementation is a reality in the Bethlehem district.

The Program Coordinator dictates basic keystones of the program such as curriculum adaptation, with the focus on meaningful experiences in reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension in the elementary and middle schools. Exactly how this adaptation is carried out, though, is left largely to the judgment of the building staff. Naturally, this results in a variety of approaches which will be assessed over time.

### ESOL Teachers Recommend Modifications

Observations and interviews substantiated the survey results which had credited the success of the English Acquisition Program to the ESOL teachers. This dedicated core of professionals has been vital to the success of the program to date. These teachers demonstrated competence in using a wide variety of teaching strategies, providing their students with the background knowledge, vocabulary, support learning in the content areas, and information about the pragmatics of communication that make ESOL classes highly motivating. They were open in stating their concerns and questions to the evaluators, and were impressive in their ability to assess potential program refinements from a cost-benefit view.

While opinions varied from school to school, some of the concerns related to program refinement that were most often expressed by the ESOL teachers include:

1. the need for more time to collaborate, or a more effective means of collaborating, with the regular classroom teachers

2. the need for ESOL teachers to have more training in teaching reading to English language learners, as well as more training in the identification of the differences between second language learning and learning disabilities

3. the need for regular classroom teachers at all grade levels and especially those in low and medium impact schools to receive more training in second language acquisition and curriculum adaptation

4. more effort to be made to encourage parent involvement in low and medium impact schools.

ESOL teachers generally expressed satisfaction with the efforts of the regular classroom teachers and recognized the major adjustment that was being made by the staff members who had not previously worked with limited-English students. In previous years these students had been bused to other schools and segregated for native language instruction.

It is the belief of the evaluators that ESOL teachers are a valuable resource and they should be trained in leadership skills in order that they may become leaders of study support groups. The study support group is a model for staff development which was described earlier in this paper. It is also recommended that ESOL teachers be encouraged to do peer observations within and outside of the district as part of their own professional development. ESOL teachers are encouraged to participate in national conferences and to write articles on their experiences, not only to gain recognition but to contribute to their profession at the state and national levels.

A final general observation about the level of cooperation observed by all staff members in the implementation of the English Acquisition Program is important to other districts considering the development of such a program. While "outside" experts are helpful in the development of a new program due to their broad knowledge and experience, the teaching staff must be actively involved in the design of any program from the conception of the program philosophy to the on-going modifications once the program is implemented. The enthusiasm of staff toward the program is largely dependent upon early participation.

The Bethlehem administration has successfully engaged the professional staff in developing a program based on sound theory with practical applications. While there is certainly room for improvement, as the following section of this article will outline, the level of cooperation of staff and administration is greatly increased when in-house expertise is recognized. As evaluators, we were consistently impressed by the honest and forthright evaluations of the present status of the programs in their buildings by teachers and administrators. Staff was regularly willing to share perceptions, concerns and achievements and eager for reactions from the evaluators.

**Effective Program Administration**

The Program Coordinator is important to the success of any innovation but especially to a program that began amid emotional and political controversy. The coordinator of the program serves not only as an administrator but also must provide leadership to a group of professionals with a variety of conflicting attitudes, viewpoints and agendas. Evaluators believe that the ability of the Program Coordinator to obtain resources and inspire cooperation from building administrators is highly correlated with the program's success.

The Program Coordinator outlined several issues that are beginning to be addressed to improve the program, which coincided with recommendations of the university evaluators. A committee including the head of Gifted Education and the Director of Special Education is studying ways of increasing nominations of LEP students to the district's gifted program. This committee is drafting guidelines and issuing new parent and staff evaluations to be used in identifying gifted, limited-English students. These will be reviewed by principals in the near future.

## Teaching At-Risk Students in the Elementary Grades

Strategies are being developed for use with hard-to-teach students. In the case of students who are having very limited success in English reading and writing after one or two years in the ESOL program, they should be referred for other kinds of help. Schools try a variety of strategies including parent support, peer tutoring, and individual assistance from teacher aides.

One of the most dramatic successes for first grade students has been the Reading Recovery program. Students drawn from the lowest 20 percent of the first grade classes, including English learners, are given 20 weeks of daily instruction for 30 minutes by a trained Reading Recovery teacher. The majority of these students, who otherwise would have been retained in grade or referred for special education, have learned to read at average levels, and do not need further remediation. Follow-up studies show that these students maintain their success into second grade. Reading Recovery requires services from teachers who undertake a year long graduate class under the supervision of a trained teacher-leader.

Although skeptics did not believe that this program could help students at the beginner level of English language proficiency, results here and in New York City (see pages 17-20) demonstrate the success of the program by reporting gains in both reading and oral proficiency. This intervention is highly intensive and is reserved for the very hard-to-teach first grader. Additional Reading Recovery teachers will be trained in the 1995-96 school year, and other possibilities are also being considered.

The need for home reading materials that students can read with 90 percent accuracy is also an important consideration for future planning. Results of programs which provide home reading on a regular basis have demonstrated the improvement of oral language and literacy (Krashen, 1993).

## Additional Features

Providing training to all staff in multicultural approaches and fostering positive relationships among the diverse student population is also a major objective. The assistant superintendent has spearheaded an effort which involves the Equity Academy in looking at the reasons for low achievement by minority students. A committee has selected three options for training that all staff in the district will be required to attend.

Other concerns include additional staff training in adapting curriculum, with particular emphasis in grades 4-12 where curriculum requirements are demanding; coping with the problem of educating a highly transient population of LEP students; and familiarizing teachers with the concept of a "silent period" in second language learning (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982). Often teachers assume a child is not talking because of shyness or a defiant attitude. Teachers need to understand that many second language learners go through a prolonged silent period when they are absorbing a lot of language but are not yet ready to express themselves and that, of course, this period varies greatly in different students.

### General Recommendations

Overall, the English Acquisition Program appears to be well-designed and implemented. The early evaluation of this program yielded the following recommendations which could appreciably improve the program in the next few years:

- more continuity between the programs in the elementary, middle, and high schools
- increasing curriculum adaptation and integration
- greater use of computer-assisted instruction
- refinement of student assessment procedures. The present assessment procedures are adequate but entry-level and achievement testing could be strengthened by more effective use of standardized and informal instruments, by the use of portfolios, and by experimenting with other techniques appropriate for use with the Bethlehem curriculum and the limited-English population.

Staff development is needed in all the areas outlined above and it is recommended that a long range plan for all training be prepared by the Program Coordinator. Seeking funding from Title VII under the grants for alternative programs is one option for supporting this project, although teacher training may be financed by grants from other foundations.

## ON-SITE EVALUATIONS AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Curriculum adaptation is done consistently in the primary grades due to the close collaboration between ESOL teaches and classroom teachers. In order to assure the language minority students' fullest participation in classroom activities and their ability to comprehend grade appropriate content, teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies in both the ESOL classrooms and regular self-contained classrooms.

In general, a child-centered approach was used that actively involved students in meaningful, hands-on activities combined with skills instruction when appropriate. Skills instruction took place individually, in small groups, and in whole group activities. Among the strategies observed most frequently were Total Physical

Response (TPR) instruction, employing multiple modalities, cooperative learning activities, and computer-assisted instruction.

The literature-based reading series involves the integrated use of the four language skills--reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension--an optimal approach for second language learners. Some teachers integrate other content area curriculum objectives around the themes of authentic children's literature, rather than the less natural and often contrived basal reading series stories. While some of the teachers were more comfortable than others in implementing the integrated curriculum approach and adapting curriculum to meet the need of LEP students, the total number of teachers observed and interviewed who use the integrated adapted curriculum approach extensively or consistently is not large at this time. Additional training will make teachers more knowledgeable and confident in using this approach.

While it might be argued that this training should have been given prior to the implementation of the English Acquisition Program, it should be taken into consideration that the majority of teachers in the district had not had extensive experience with whole language or with language minority students before 1993. It is more likely that after two years of experience with these students, they have come to recognize their special characteristics and understand their own needs for further training.

Computers are used in every regular elementary classroom, as well as ESOL classrooms. While it appears that most classes are using software programs as reinforcement for English and academic concepts taught as enrichment for students who were advanced in their progress or simply as a word processing program to enhance the writing and publishing program outlined in the whole language series, the technology program at the Freemansburg Elementary School was truly an exemplary model that could be adopted elsewhere.

Teacher Rita Hatton, for example, has developed a classroom rich in speaking and writing activities, and uses a variety of software programs to introduce, practice and reinforce English language learning. Especially noteworthy is Mrs. Hatton's adaptation of the Apple Early Language Program (Apple, 1992) for use with her students. Recently, Mrs. Hatton was awarded a grant of $10,000 to expand her computer-assisted instruction approach to include a component that will enhance language minority parents' ability to help their children on home assignments such as the writing of an autobiography.

A broader based application of computer-assisted instruction in all classrooms modeled upon the program at the Freemansburg Elementary School would be one approach to curriculum adaptation that would be effective not only in the primary grades but in the middle school grades and high school. A more sophisticated computer-assisted instructional program might assist teachers in solving the problem of transitory students joining the class throughout the school year with an appropriate span of graded materials for different ability levels allowing newcomers to work individually on essential skills without disrupting normal classroom activities.

It is sometimes necessary to provide appropriate materials for the child who may be well behind the level of the other LEP students in the class. The development of an individualized plan for supporting these students as they strive to learn "missed" skills or survival English would facilitate the work of both ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers across all grade levels, K-12. In the survey and interviews teachers often expressed frustration with their inability to meet the needs of these students.

Table 1 below outlines the English Acquisition Program enrollment in the elementary schools during the first two years of the program. "Students enrolled" refers to the total number of students in the English Acquisition Program enrolled in each of the districts 16 elementary schools. The next column indicates the number of students who have spent two full years in the school. The large percentage of students who come and go within one school year, or who move to another school after one year is reflected in these columns. The next four columns report the positive program changes, students who move up from beginner to intermediate, from intermediate to advanced, and from advanced to exit over the past two years of program operation.

Table 1:
English Acquisition Program Enrollment and Program Changes During the First Two Years of Program Implementation

| School | Students Enrolled | Full 2 Yr. Students | Second Yr. Changes | First Yr. Changes | Total Changes | Exited |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 22 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 3 |
| 2 | 18 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 3 |
| 3 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 13 | 3 |
| 4 | 50 | 18 | 12 | 15 | 27 | 16 |
| 5 | 346 | 86 | 74 | 98 | 172 | 42 |
| 6 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | 96 | 19 | 37 | 13 | 50 | 14 |
| 8 | 145 | 48 | 23 | 36 | 59 | 19 |
| 9 | 17 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 |
| 10 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| 11 | 67 | 28 | 9 | 16 | 25 | 5 |
| 12 | 192 | 96 | 44 | 45 | 89 | 31 |
| 13 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 14 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 3 |
| 15 | 16 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 13 | 4 |
| 16 | 17 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 13 | 2 |

## ON-SITE MIDDLE SCHOOL EVALUATION

The "buddy system" has been successful at the middle school level according to the survey responses of the teachers. While evaluators did not directly observe the buddy system in action, we agree with the teachers and administration that this activity needs to be expanded to include more training and support for the students who become "buddies" to the newer LEP students. Various extensions of the "buddy system" have been suggested and a plan for more systematic training and support of "buddies" is under way.

It was also suggested that the peer and adult mentoring recommended at the high school be extended downward into the middle school in the belief that it is easier for a sixth or seventh grader to accept the guidance of an adult mentor if the relationship begins prior to the adolescent years when students' inclinations become focused on interaction with age peers.

Training in curriculum adaptation and integration will be helpful to teachers at this level, once they have a thorough understanding of the process of acquiring a second language in relationship to other adolescent developmental changes.

It was evident in our observations that students in the middle school were more likely than the students in the elementary school to lapse into their native language when placed in cooperative learning groups. While occasional interaction in Spanish as students clarify concepts and ideas for each other is to be accepted and encouraged, it is important that students have plenty of opportunity to work in cooperative learning groups not only in the ESOL classes, but also in the regular classroom where they will be obliged to engage in meaningful communication with native English speakers more frequently. The Latino students at this age level tend to segregate themselves socially within the heterogeneously grouped classrooms. This is particularly true of the those whose English is more limited--the beginner and intermediate level students.

Middle school students would benefit from a greater amount of collaboration between the ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers. Without such collaboration there is the tendency for ESOL teachers to engage students in grammatical drill from ESL texts or to plan lessons that oversimplify the content material. While this was certainly not the case in all middle school observations, it would be advisable, as the material becomes more abstract and sophisticated, for the ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers to provide an even greater amount of support through vocabulary building and activation of prior knowledge to facilitate LEP students' assimilation of new material.

The issue of transitory students becomes an even greater problem at the middle school level, as there is no prescribed manner in which to address the needs of students who have attended school irregularly or who have in some cases attended as many as five schools in a single year. They seem to have very low levels of motivation and it appears that their primary goal is to leave school entirely as soon as they are old enough to do so. These students often have very limited skills in English, either because they have not had the opportunity for sustained ESL instruction in any one district or because they have lost interest in language learning due to the fact that they have been kept in beginner classes.

Special care must be given to the assessment of English proficiency at the middle school level as students at this level are more sophisticated in social discourse and are even more likely than the elementary students to appear more proficient in English than they actually are. There was some evidence of difficulties in transitions between the beginning and intermediate level instruction in ESOL at the middle schools. However, this difficulty may be due to unrealistic expectations on the part of teachers as compared to the competencies outlined by the district at this level. The Program Coordinator suggested that teachers may not take note of the fact that students who progress from beginner to intermediate level mid-way through the school year will not be functioning on a level equivalent to the students who have been in the intermediate level program since the start of the school year.

Middle school teachers must come to realize the value of a more thoroughly integrated and adapted curriculum as a means of promoting cognitive academic development and for reducing the likelihood of learning difficulties among LEP students. Unfortunately, there have been no studies to date to compare the progress of limited-English students in an integrated curriculum with those receiving traditional teaching. Computer-assisted instruction should be explored as one approach to curriculum issues. A computer resource center based on the high school model where each student spends one period per day using special materials that parallel course content would be a useful consideration for future planning.

Recognizing that this age group is difficult to work with at times, it is recommended that a team of teachers explore the idea of 10 week courses on themes which would be of high interest to language minority students as well as other early adolescents. These themes might vary from practical ones (consumerism - "How to keep from getting ripped off") to more abstract topics that lend themselves easily to more typical content learning ("war", "water", "color") which could be team taught.

Workbooks are still overly used, despite the advice of ESOL teachers that it is best to use other materials. Training on how and when to use the ESOL texts and how to adapt the text to the general content curriculum could reduce the tendency for over-reliance on workbooks.

## ON-SITE OBSERVATION IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Many of Bethlehem's limited-English students clearly demonstrated their ability to function in college preparatory classes. The majority of teachers at the high school understand the needs of language minority students and are supportive of their cognitive development. However, as in the elementary and middle school, there is a considerable degree of variability in the degree to which curriculum is adapted and ESOL techniques are used in the regular classroom. It is apparent that the district has some very professional and dedicated teachers, many of whom have the ability to synthesize curriculum and materials effectively for their LEP students; others will need training to acquire these skills.

It must be recognized that the students presently matriculating at the middle schools and high school were, for the most part, in the previous bilingual program or are newcomers to the district, consequently their school achievement cannot be credited to the effects of the new program. It can be said, however, that the students observed by the evaluators appeared to have experienced no negative effects due to the program change that has taken place. The evaluators hope to conduct focus group interviews with some of these students during the 1995-1996 school year to survey students' impressions of the English Acquisition Program, and the impact of the program change on them as far as academic achievement and social integration. Such information will be useful to other districts that are planning program changes of the sort that Bethlehem has implemented.

The computer resource room should become an increasingly useful source of academic support for language minority students as more teachers become more knowledgeable in their uses of software programs. Observations of limited-English students assigned to work in this room during study halls revealed the potential for creativity on the part of the students in using the various programs available.

Observations and interviews indicate that the usefulness and quality of texts is limited. A reconsideration of texts is in order, to determine which texts are really effective in ESOL instruction and how selected texts support learning in the content areas.

## PRELIMINARY DATA ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Preliminary evaluation of data on the progress of students from one English language level to the next indicates promising results (see Table 1). Kindergarten students are evaluated based on oral language proficiency only, while students in the first through twelfth grades are evaluated for oral language, reading and writing proficiencies. Typical newcomer beginner level students are rated as being at stage 1 in oral proficiency in English, stage 1 in reading, and stage 1 in writing. Typical intermediate level students are rated as 3-4 in oral proficiency, 3 in reading, and 2-3 in writing. (See description of English learning stages in Appendix A.)

Review of the students who entered kindergarten in the 1993-1994 school year, the first year of implementation of the English Acquisition Program, found the following:

1. Sixty students of the original 90 are still attending school in the district

2. Thirty-two percent of the sixty moved up to the next program level

3. Fifteen percent moved up two program levels (from beginner to advanced, or intermediate to exit)

4. Ten percent moved down to a lower program level because of limited skills in reading and writing (the lower levels provide more support services by the ESOL teachers)

5. Ten percent of the original sixty exited the program (upon entrance three of these exited students were beginners, and three were intermediate level students)

6. Forty-five percent of the original group of students are still at the same program level, but demonstrated an average of 3 points growth on the scales of oral language, reading and writing. Teachers agreed that most of these students are ready to move to the higher level during the next school year, but their present placement enables them to receive the more intensive support necessary for success in the regular classroom.

As of June, 1995, analysis of data from all students in the program, grades K-12 showed that 29 percent of the students at the beginner level in the first quarter of the school year had moved to the intermediate level by June. Twelve percent of the students who were in the intermediate level the first quarter of the year had moved to the advanced level by June. Forty-six percent of the students who were classified as advanced in November had qualified to exit the program by June. The relatively lower number of intermediate students who moved up to the advanced level may be due to the wide range of proficiencies described as "intermediate," and to teacher reluctance to move the students to the advanced level where the ESOL support is substantially reduced. Once a student is at the advanced level, the likelihood is great (almost half) that he or she will exit the program within the year.

## SUMMARY

Overall the Bethlehem Area School District's English Acquisition Program is an excellent example of a program that emphasizes the goal of English fluency and simultaneously provides the support that language minority students need to gain knowledge and skills at a developmentally appropriate level while acquiring second language fluency. This program extends its support of LEP students well beyond that which is typical in structured immersion programs. The district has designed a program that is practical yet well-grounded in current theory and research.

Key factors are the close connection between this language program and the general district curriculum; an emphasis on adapting curriculum and teaching/learning strategies to facilitate academic content learning; the use of technology as a support system for English language learners; and the close collaboration between ESOL teachers and regular classroom teachers. Advance planning and teacher training were sufficient for early organization of the program. As shown by the formative evaluation, there is an on-going need for staff training and curriculum modification for the next three years at the least.

The social and political contexts of the community that could have been divisive were successfully dealt with and were sensitively handled to encourage cooperation and participation by staff, parents and community. Parents are highly supportive of this program, and therefore another priority of the district should be to build on this parental support to encourage their greater involvement in their children's education. The district could cooperate with other community agencies in coordinating efforts to develop family literacy programs. Clearly, any social services that help language minority families improve their living situation will certainly improve the educational prospects of the district's language minority students. Several ideas for pilot programs are in the planning stages in the Bethlehem district at present.

The significant amount of time and effort that is required to develop and refine an English Acquisition Program which provides continuity and quality education for language minority students should be readily apparent after reading the process and progress of the Bethlehem program to date. The development of such programs requires careful planning based on research, practical experience, context analysis and staff input. Issues such as student curriculum adaptation and integration, student progress evaluation, textbook adoption, parent involvement, and staff development are all aspects of the program that would benefit from further refinement, but it must be reiterated that the program to date as observed by the university evaluators is one that is superior in quality to many of the programs we have researched and could well be adopted by other districts.

Bethlehem demonstrates a strong dedication to its language minority students by its openness to new ideas and its willingness to commit resources to program change and improvement. The district also displays a serious concern for accountability in its support for rigorous program evaluation. The formative and summative evaluations started in 1993 will be carried forward in the next few years and should make a valuable contribution to the literature in the field.

What has been reported so far on the first two years of the English Acquisition Program is mainly the story of the preparation and start up process, with a minimum of information on student achievement. The crucial data on student achievement over time will be reported with much more detail in each of the next five to ten years. It is these data that are awaited with great interest. It is the hope of the authors of this article that other school districts will be encouraged to develop English learning programs like Bethlehem's and that they will document their results carefully and disseminate them freely, as Bethlehem is doing. The information gained from such endeavors will be valuable to the many additional school districts that will in future need to accommodate to the rapidly growing population of limited-English students. Such information will be valuable in planning education programs that will give future teachers a strong preparation in the theory and practices required to meet the needs of language minority students in the 21st century.

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## APPENDIX A

Stages of English Language Acquisition for Oral/Aural, Reading, and Writing Development (June, 1993)

(Adapted from Fairfax County, Virginia Communicative Stages in Second Language Acquisition)

Stages are not exact points but describe a continuum from the beginning of a stage to the upper limit of a stage. An occasional non-English word is acceptable at the higher stages. An accent is acceptable at all stages.

### Oral/Aural Language Stages in English

STAGE 1:

- Understands little or no English.
- Uses no English except for a word or two.
- Names objects.

STAGE 2:

- Understands only slow simple speech; requires repetitions.
- Speech is slow except for short patterns.
- Is able to use functional words and phrases.
- Is unable to use English for significant communication.
- Vocabulary is limited to basic personal and survival areas.

STAGE 3:

- Understands simplified speech with repetitions and rephrasing.
- Speech is hesitant and uneven; some sentences left incomplete.
- Uses simple speech and gestures with predominantly present tense verbs.
- Demonstrates errors of omission; leaves words out; leaves endings off.
- Vocabulary is limited preventing continuous conversation.

STAGE 4:

- Understands adult speech but requires repetition and rephrasing.
- Speech may be hesitant because of rephrasing and groping for words.
- Uses some complex structures.
- Overgeneralizes rules of grammar.
- Has difficulty with choice of verb tense, verb tense consistency, and subject/verb agreement.
- Vocabulary is adequate to carry on basic conversation; some word usage difficulties.

STAGE 5:

- Understands most adult speech except some advanced structures.

Responds in detail, often with hesitations or digressions that do not impede narrative.

Errors made are not uncommon among proficient speakers of standard American English and do not distract from story line.

Uses most basic grammatical structures with occasional error in syntax. Some errors in a young learner may be seen as developmental.

Vocabulary is sufficiently varied to express ideas clearly.

STAGE 6:

Able to express themselves adequately to succeed in a regular education program with no ESOL support.

## Reading Stages in English

STAGE 1:

Attends to pictures and objects, but not print.

STAGE 2:

Beginning to understand conventions of print such as reading from left to right and the concepts of letters and words.

STAGE 3:

Participates in choral reading activities and/or can identify some sound/symbol relationships along with some high frequency words.

STAGE 4:

Decodes simple sentences without assistance but may not associate meaning.

STAGE 5:

Reads some words and simple sentences without assistance and is able to retell the meaning of a simple passage.

STAGE 6:

Uses reading strategies to understand main ideas appropriate to the student's grade level, but may need ESOL support to understand more advanced concepts.

STAGE 7:

Demonstrates reading ability appropriate to succeed in a regular education program with decreasing ESOL support.

STAGE 8:

Demonstrates reading ability appropriate to succeed in a regular education program with ESOL support only as needed.

**Writing Stages in English**

STAGE 1:

Draws a picture.

Has no knowledge of the written word.

Writes name only.

Writes isolated letters or words only.

STAGE 2:

Writes in phrases and simple patterned sentences only.

Uses limited vocabulary, and mostly present tense verbs.

May use temporary spellings.

STAGE 3:

Writes concrete description of a picture/idea commensurate with the student's oral ability.

Writes sentences centered around one idea, but not necessarily in sequential order with errors, but commensurate with student's oral ability.

Has some knowledge of rules of punctuation and capitalization, but may not use them consistently.

Uses spellings which are readable.

STAGE 4:

Has story line and/or central idea present.

Able to write a summary of a story in correct sequence.

Shows sequential relationship between sentences.

Uses some compound and complex sentences.

Demonstrates general control of most basic grammatical structures, (e.g., subject/verb agreement, standard word order, consistent verb tense), but still contains errors.

Uses punctuation and capitalization correctly most of the time.

Uses some conventional spellings.

STAGE 5:

Demonstrates writing ability appropriate to succeed in a regular education program with ESOL support only as needed.

## APPENDIX B

### Bethlehem Area School District Secondary Program of Studies

EAP and TEP are 2 strands of the high school program for limited-English students: TEP is the program for college bound students; EAP is oriented towards students pursuing the vocational and commercial tracks.

**EAP I - Grades 9-10**

2pds. Composition/Reading Development
2pds. Oral Language Development
1pd. Keyboarding (2nd semester)
1pd. EAP 1 Math
1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room
1pd. Physical Education/Elective

**EAP 2 - Grades 10-11**

1pd. EAP 2 English Language Development
1pd. EAP 2 Life Science
1pd. EAP World Geography
1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room
3pds. Vo-tech/Business classes
1pd. Physical Education/Elective/Keyboarding

**EAP 3 - Grades 10-12**

1pd. EAP 3 English Language Development
1pd. EAP 3 Science
1pd. EAP World Geography
1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room
3pds. Vo-Tech/Business Classes
All other classes in the regular program.

**EAP 4 - Grades 10-12**

1pd. English Language Development
1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room
3pds. Vo-Tech/Business Classes (or in reg. prog.)

**TEP 1 - Grades 9-10**

2pds. Composition/Reading Development
2pds. Oral Language Development
1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room
1pd. Keyboarding (First Semester)

- 1pd. Mathematics (EAP 1 Math or from transcript
- 1pd. Physical Education/Elective

**TEP 2 - Grades 9-11**

- 3pds. English Language Development
- 1pd. TEP 2 Science Concepts
- 1pd. TEP 2 Social Studies Concepts
- 1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room

All other classes are in the mainstream.

**TEP 3 - Grades 9-12**

- 1pd. Transitional English
- 1pd. English 9B
- 1pd. Content Area Reading
- 1pd. TEP Government/Economics
- 1pd. TEP Physical Science
- 1pd. English Acquisition Resource Room

All other classes are in the mainstream.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARK CONNELLY, S.J., Ph.D., received his doctorate in linguistics from Harvard University and lectures at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia on second language teaching methodology, linguistics, and Italian. His professional interests include first and second language phonology and literacy acquisition.

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(9/92)

## ENGLISH ACQUISITION STAGE

| | ELEMENTARY | | | | MIDDLE | | | | HIGH | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Beg. | Int. | Adv. | Comp. | Beg. | Int. | Adv. | Comp. | Beg. | Int. | Adv. | Comp. |
| **Oral/Aural** | 1<br>2<br>3 | 3<br>4 | 4<br>5 | 5<br>6 | 1<br>2<br>3 | 3<br>4 | 4<br>5 | 5<br>6 | 1<br>2<br>3 | 3<br>4 | 4<br>5 | 6 |
| **Reading** | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4 | 4<br>5 | 5<br>6 | 7<br>8 | 3<br>4<br>5 | 6 | 6<br>7 | 7<br>8 | 1<br>2<br>3<br>4<br>5 | 6 | 6<br>7 | 6<br>7<br>8 |
| **Writing** | 1<br>2 | 2<br>3 | 3 | 4<br>5 | 1<br>2<br>3 | 3 | 4 | 4<br>5 | 1<br>2<br>3 | 3<br>4 | 4 | 5<br>6 |